Daily Report

Latin America

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FBIS-LAT-96-039 *27 February 1996*

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Inter-American Affairs: C.A. Nations on Anti-Cuba Steps

PA2702010696 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2259 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] San Salvador, 26 Feb (ACAN-EFE) — Central America today supported the measures adopted by the United States against Cuba for downing two small U.S. civilian airplanes and its decision to take the case before the UN Security Council.

The Central American countries' support came during the meeting the presidents of the isthmus held today in San Salvador with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. [passage omitted quoting Christopher remarks]

After the meeting, Salvadoran President Armando Calderon Sol, speaking on the region's behalf, condemned the incident and insisted that the airplanes downed by the Cuban fighter bombers were civilian.

Calderon said at a news conference that "the Central American presidents are of one mind" regarding the new crisis unleashed between the United States and Cuba. [passage omitted quoting Christopher remarks]

In addition to Calderon Sol, the meeting with Christopher was attended by Costa Rican President Jose Maria Figueres; Honduran President Carlos Roberto Reina; Belizean Prime Minister Manuel Esquivel; and Nicaraguan Vice President Julia Mena Portocarrero.

The presidents of Guatemala, Alvaro Arzu; Nicaragua, Violeta Chamorro; and Panama, Ernesto Perez Balladares, were unable to attend due to previous commitments.

Inter-American Affairs: Calderon Statements at Summit

PA2702051696 San Salvador Radio Nacional de El Salvador Network in Spanish 2200 GMT 26 Feb 96

[Opening statement by Salvadoran President Armando Calderon before joint news conference with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in San Salvador — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Before we begin, I would like to say that El Salvador has been very honored with the presence of the presidents, the prime minister of Belize, and the visit by the U.S. secretary of state. For Salvadorans, this is a gesture that fills us with satisfaction.

We believe that our peace process, our democracy that is advancing each passing day is strengthened by the presence of the presidents and the secretary of state.

We have held a very fruitful meeting for Central America. We have also discussed current issues of international policy, and we have analyzed and discussed world problems.

We have regretted and condemned the violence used in downing civilian aircraft by Cuban military forces. Central American presidents and the Belizean prime minister have unanimously agreed that the position of the United States and President Clinton to seek the UN forum is a real example for the entire world on how we can resolve problems, through international law. This incident, which we regret, along with the deaths of civilians, has violated... [pauses] but the reaction of President Clinton and the United States has been to seek the world forum — the United Nations — and appeal to international law.

This fills us with satisfaction and we express our solidarity with the action and position of the U.S. people and government in the face of this incident.

We have also talked about the problem of trade parity, indicating that Central America and the Caribbean need to obtain a system with parity the same as Mexico obtained in NAFTA. We believe that if we do not obtain a system of parity, we will be at a very disadvantageous position in our trade. Our countries and the Central American region need to generate more jobs and must support this free trade. This is why we have discussed this at length and we have received a positive response from the secretary of state on behalf of the U.S. position. We hope that in the very short term we will have a reply from the U.S. Government at Congress with regard to this system of trade parity.

We have also discussed topics that are important for the Central American people, especially the Salvadoran people. Such is the topic of our emigrants in the United States. We have received assurances from the secretary of state about the respect for our compatriots and the Central Americans. There will be no massive deportations as some news media have reported. We have also discussed the need to have our Central American brothers and the emigrants... [pauses] who are concerned, the same as we are concerned, that an anti-immigrant feeling is emerging in political and social sectors in the United States. This is of great concern for us. The secretary of state has expressed his and the Clinton administration's concern about this.

We have also talked about cooperation to fight drug trafficking and organized crime. We have also talked about the need to strengthen our police, our National Civilian Police, and all the Central American police, who are in a constant struggle against crime, corruption, and drug trafficking. We have talked about other forms of cooperation with the United States. I think it has been a very important meeting, a working meeting. We thank the secretary of state for beginning his Latin American tour in Central America. Thank you very much.

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Cuba

Cuba: Mexican Organizations Express Solidarity With Cuba

PA2602152796 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 2150 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mexico City, 25 Feb (PL) — Approximately 100 Mexican political organizations are expressing solidarity with Cuba and today demanded that the United States put an end to the attacks against the island, such as yesterday's violation of its airspace.

In a resolution approved after a two-day meeting, the participants recalled that aircraft like the two downed yesterday are piloted by members of counterrevolutionary bands operating from U.S. territory.

We voice our strongest protest to the reiterated acts of provocation that those groups carry out with U.S. consent and complicity, the document stressed.

The document noted that those actions openly and flagrantly violate Cuba's sovereignty and the planes that yesterday entered the Cuban airspace and were downed in a legitimate act of defense were trying to commit actions against the Cuban people and Cuban Government.

The Mexican groups also demanded an immediate stop to those illegal operations and agreed to create a special commission to immediately deliver the protest note to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

The solidarity meeting was inaugurated yesterday at the Labor University in Mexico City with the participation of representatives from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN), and Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), the most important political parties in the country, as well as other political, social, and community groups.

The almost 200 delegates who participated in the meeting also supported with shouts such as "Cuba Yes, Yankees No" a message with greetings received from Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina, which he sent from Copenhagen. In his message, Robaina stressed the Cuban people's determination to defend the revolution at any cost.

We will do the utmost to defend the Cuban revolution, with all our passion and blood, at any cost. We are inspired by those who like you, anywhere in the world, understand that our position of Free Fatherland or Death has only one alternative: To overcome, the Cuban foreign minister's note stressed.

Robaina said that those who are promoting disinformation campaigns about liberty in Cuba are covering up destabilizing plans unsuccessfully contrived for more than 30 years.

In the same manner, leaders of associations of Cuban emigrants residing in the United States informed PRENSA LATINA via telephone that preparations have begun for a campaign that will include telephone calls, letters and telegrams to the White House expressing support to Cuba's sovereignty.

The same sources said that a large part of the Cuban emigrants are convinced that the incident that ended with the downing of the planes was the result of a provocation. They announced that they will hold a news conference, probably tomorrow, to state their position.

Cuba: U.S. Call for UN Meeting 'Out of Proportion'

PA2602145996 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 0821 GMT 26 Feb 96

[By Roberto Molina; "Everybody Wonders: What About Cuba?" — PRENSA LATINA headline]

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 26 Feb (PL) — Observers, diplomats, and reporters are saying that the United States is blowing the situation out of proportion in its call for a UN Security Council meeting following the Cuban Air Force's downing of two pirate planes.

Washington ignored Cuba's official statement and summoned the 15 UN Security Council members to private meeting on 25 February, employing only its own arguments and those of the individuals who were responsible for violating Cuba's airspace.

This meeting has been described as in keeping with the Republican ultra-rightist bloc's thinking. From improvised tribunes organized by the sponsors of these pirate flights, some members of this bloc who are of Cuban descent — like Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart — have shouted calls for the U.S. Government's intervention at the UN Security Council.

Many observers have described this behavior as the only solution the White House had for fear that the Republican Party profited from this event during the current pitched battle for the country's presidency during the November elections.

UN officials and diplomats from various countries — whose Sunday rest was interrupted because the United States asked for the UN Security Council meetings — have flatly said the aforementioned was the real reason for all this fuss.

Madeleine Albright, permanent U.S. representative to the United Nations and UN Security Council chairperson since last February, has repeated to reporters the

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same information that has been disclosed by the media, based solely upon on the partial version given by the U.S. State Department.

Although the Cuban permanent mission to the United Nations distributed to the media yesterday an official statement from the Cuban Foreign Ministry, Mrs. Albright made no mention of it but only said that today she will hear "the other side of the story" — her own words — from Pedro Nunez Mosquera, Cuban charge d'affaires to the United Nations.

Albright was less enthusiastic following the private UN Security Council meeting and decided to inform reporters that she will continue negotiating a consensus on the declaration of the UN Security Council chairperson on 26 February.

The draft of this document — which the United States had presented even before yesterday's meeting — insists that these two airplanes were downed over international waters; claims that the Cuban Government should refrain from using force in similar future situations; and recommends to follow up this matter, including the consideration of possible measures.

Most observers believe that the U.S. response is out of proportion, especially since Cuba's repeated complaints following previous violations of its airspace and territorial waters by similar airplanes and ships transporting weapons, explosives, and individuals with the objective of subverting order in that country are being disregarded. Cuba's warnings that it will no longer tolerate similar actions have also been disregarded.

Various permanent UN Security Council members have noted the absence of additional information at the meeting, particularly the documents that Cuba has facilitated to all the missions.

They have also expressed doubts about the documents that were made available to the UN Security Council — all of which were provided by the United States — and have pointed out that it will be necessary to consult their respective foreign ministries before any decision is made.

They have also indicated that bringing such a matter before the UN Security Council sets a dangerous precedent because it does not constitute a threat to international peace and security, which is a prerequisite for its discussion.

Many wonder: And what about Cuba? Will the violation of Cuba's territorial waters and airspace still be tolerated? Does this imply a threat to the sovereignty of a member state and the security of its citizens? Might these actions intensify already tense relations between Cuba and the United States? These are just some of the many questions people are asking.

Diplomats and analysts attempt to draw their own conclusions amid the propagandistic flood that is pouring forth here. They seem to deduce that if there is no answer to these questions and if these are not included at the UN Security Council meeting, it would be necessary to also wonder if the United States is knowingly allowing the use of its airports, airspace, and territorial waters for these vandalistic actions.

Cuba: Pilot of Cuban Military Jet Interviewed

PA2602153496 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1357 GMT 26 Feb 96

["Exclusive" interview with Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Perez Perez by Armando Ruiz Martinez; place and date not given; from the "Doing Radio" newscast — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Begin recording] [Ruiz Martinez] On Saturday 24 February 1996, the enemy violated Cuba's airspace, while Lieutenant Colonels Alberto and Francisco Perez Perez fulfilled their assignment.

Referring to this incident, Lt. Col. Francisco Perez Perez said:

[Perez] We were on duty. We received orders to take off and locate a target violating the Cuban airspace to the north of Havana. We took off in two aircrafts. Alberto and I flew one of the aircrafts, while Emilio Palacios flew the second one, which was covering us. We received the order to locate the target, as I said before, [words indistinct] and after we located and identified the target, we issued a warning for it to leave Cuban airspace. The target paid no attention to the warning, and subsequently, we received orders to bring it down. We took the measures to bring down the target and we completed our mission.

[Ruiz Martinez] After fulfilling this mission, which is now part of the pages of our history, Francisco Perez Perez: What is your message to the Cuban people?

[Perez] We want to tell the Cuban people that we are part of it and that we are willing to defend its integrity with our own lives. [end recording]

Cuba: Nation Asks UN To Delay Debate for Robaina's Arrival

PA2602163596 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1544 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 26 Feb (EFE) — Cuba asked today that the UN Security Council

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postpone the discussion of the downing of two light planes by Cuban fighter planes until Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina arrives to tell his side of the story.

After meeting with Madeleine Albright, president of the Council and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Pedro Nunez Mosquera, Cuban charge d'affaires to the United Nations, said that Robaina plans to arrive in New York tomorrow.

Nunez asked Albright to delay the debate of the Council until Robaina's arrival, and the U.S. ambassador told him that she would propose his request to the plenum of the Council.

Cuba: EU Ambassadors Condemn Airplanes' Downing

PA2602164596 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1553 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 26 Feb (EFE) — The ambassadors from countries that currently comprise the European Union "troika" met today, Monday, with Vice Foreign Minister Isabel Allende to convey the EU's condemnation of the downing of two light airplanes belonging to the Brothers to the Rescue group.

Attending the meeting with Allende were the ambassadors from Spain, Italy, and Holland, on behalf of Ireland that does not have an ambassador in Havana.

Diplomatic sources stated that the ambassadors conveyed to the vice minister the terms of the communique released in Brussels, in which the EU "strongly" condemned the downing and requested an immediate investigation to establish responsibilities.

In a statement issued this morning, the Cuban Foreign Ministry affirmed that Cuba has "irrefutable proof" that the airplanes violated its airspace and were downed in Cuban territorial waters.

Cuba: Commentators Note 'Contradiction' in U.S. Remarks

PA2602200596 Havana Cubavision Network in Spanish 1730 GMT 26 Feb 96

[From the "At Noon" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Station announcer Julio Alcanda] Terrorism against Cuba from the United States. That is today's topic with Carlos Iglesias. Good afternoon.

[Iglesias] Good afternoon. We may repeat some things, since we discussed this topic earlier today. Regarding Saturday's incident, when Cuba downed two light airplanes that were violating its airspace, it seems appropriate to mention a current mode of terrorism that has increased a great deal recently.

[Alcanda] We could focus on the more recent developments.

[Iglesias] Of course, because otherwise this was going to the history of over 30 years of terrorism against Cuba from the United States. From December, let us begin with last December, three persons were arrested in California and five in Florida with weapons for (?massive) subversion [45-second break in reception] Freedom House. This is the background for the downing of the two light airplanes coming from Florida, for insisting in transgressing Cuban waters after being warned on several occasions. Since last year [six-second break in reception].

[Alcanda] The United States acknowledged that Cuba was entitled to stop these attacks. Do you see a contradiction between what its officials do regarding this topic and what they have said?

[Iglesias] Yes, of course. Although Washington participated in the joint search for the wreckage, after requesting permission, since this was in Cuban waters, as the Minrex [Foreign Ministry] stated, it is now describing the incident as a violation of international law. If we are going to find culprits, that country bears much of the responsibility for allowing terrorists to go unpunished. I believe that in this whole situation, the upsurge of the ultra-rightists is becoming influential. The ultra-rightists' upsurge led them to control the Congress in 1994, and has led this trend to victory in that party's primaries in Alaska, Louisiana, and New Hampshire. In addition, the candidate of this trend ran second in Iowa.

[Alcanda] Do you any proof of how the influence of this sectors has a bearing on relations with Cuba.

[Iglesias] In addition to the Freedom House incident, it would suffice to add that Jesse Helms and Daniel Burton adhere to this trend. They are the sponsors of the bill to tighten the blockade on Cuba, something the Miami terrorists have praised so highly, because the two sides share interests and ideology. We must make very clear, however, that extreme right is not acting alone against Cuba. The government, and we discussed this topic in previous commentaries, has tried to get Europe and Latin America to join the blockade on the island. It openly admitted it is financing local annexationists in the country. Then there is the repression of the friendship move with the backing of exile groups, such as Alpha 66 and others. In addition, Christopher's remarks are in contrast with the silence that marked the 1976 attack on the Cuban airplane in Barbados. It

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is clear, therefore, that the U.S. Government and its Republican rivals are hardening their stances on Cuba.

Cuba: Robaina To Protest 'Campaign of Defamation'

PA2602215596 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 1751 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Madrid, 26 Feb (PL) — Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina today departed from Denmark to the United Nations to protest before the world's highest forum the campaign of defamation against his country instigated in the United States.

During a stopover at the airport in Madrid, Robaina said he has traveled with the truth the United States has refused to hear for 35 years.

I carry a long, sad, and shameful list of actions carried out by or under the protection and complicity of the United States to violate my country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, the Cuban foreign minister said.

Robaina said he will recall at the United Nations that Cuba has patiently endured more than 20 incursions in its jurisdictional territory during the past nine months, a situation of which the world should be aware.

We cannot let only one version be heard, he said, adding: "We have a right to express our truth, because we have enough courage to tell our truth while the United States has lied unscrupulously.

Robaina questioned the fact that powerful countries have the right to commit all sorts of violations they justify at their convenience, while none of them is seated in the defendant's chair.

"I refuse to accept the accusations and blackmail, because I believe a small country such as ours, with the truth and reason on our side, is not only immensely big but becomes a power with high morale and dignity, Robaina said.

Shortly before leaving Copenhagen, where he was visiting as part of his tour of Nordic countries, Robaina via Danish television read a statement from the Cuban Foreign Ministry in which he described as cynical the language U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has used.

Apparently, Robaina said, the numerous notes sent by the Cuban Foreign Ministry to the U.S. Department of State on the frequent violations that have occurred during the past few months have not been enough. "It seems to me that Mr. Christopher is either misinformed or pretends to be misinformed," Robaina said.

"We have enough arguments to prove it was a flagrant violation of our borders, which were alerted and urged to refrain from taking any action for five hours. We have run out of patience, however, and there will be no more impunity," he said.

"We have been very fair to them," he added. "We have been too patient, excessively tolerant; we have many facts, and the United States knows it."

Had the situation occurred the other way, Robaina said, U.S. authorities would not have stopped to think as long as we did before demanding compliance with international laws.

Robaina said his country has every right not to tolerate the inadmissible, because it is exercising the sovereign right bestowed by international law to defend the nation's territorial integrity and the calm of its citizens, as well as his homeland's independence and liberty.

He recalled that the air pirates have been carrying out a special type of political terrorism ever since their business of illegal migration to the United States collapsed after the two countries reached a migration agreement in 1994.

What they were trying to do and are still trying to do is promote a new conflict between Cuba and the United States under a civilian cover-up. What they wanted to do was to turn the matter into an electoral issue and, as usual, obtain political benefits from it, Robaina charged.

Finally, citing the text of the Cuban Foreign Ministry's communique, Robaina said: "Enough of opportunism, cowardice, and attempts to mix Cuba with petty U.S. electoral politics."

Cuba: Cubans Reported Ready for U.S. Retaliation

LD2602200796 London PRESS ASSOCIATION in English 1934 GMT 26 Feb 96

[By Tim Moynihan, PA News]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Cubans are ready for anything in terms of retaliation by the United States for Havana's shooting down of two U.S. civilian light planes on Saturday, one of its diplomats said tonight.

Asked about speculation that the White House may tighten sanctions, Manuel Ayuso, First Secretary in charge of press affairs at the Embassy in London, told a news conference: "We are expecting anything. Anything could be possible, and we are ready for that."

Confirming that feelings were running high over the incident, Mr Ayuso said the row between the two countries could harm future talks between them.

The two U.S.-registered Cessna light aircraft, piloted by Cuban exiles, were shot down on Saturday. U.S.

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Secretary of State Warren Christopher has said the planes were in international waters when they were downed.

But Cuba today hit back, accusing him of lying, and saying it had "unequivocal proof" that the planes were inside Cuban air space when shot down. It said it had a pilot from the "group of violators which have carried out so many actions against our country".

But in a statement it did not specifically say this was one of the four pilots aboard the planes. No survivors have been reported so far.

The wording indicated the Cuban authorities had with them a member of the Brothers to the Rescue, a volunteer pilots group based in Miami whose planes were involved in the incident. But one report quoted foreign diplomats in Havana saying it was possible the Cubans were preparing to present a member of the group, who might in fact be a Cuban Government agent.

Asked about this, Mr Ayuso said: "I have no reason to believe he's not a pilot, I don't think the Cubans would play this kind of dirty game."

He insisted the aim of the flight had been to provoke the Cubans, at the start of celebrations to mark the 101st anniversary of the beginning of the War of Independence.

Asked who would have taken the decision to shoot down the planes, he said: "It's not a crazy decision, taken like this, in one minute. It is a gross provocation, it is the culmination of a series of incidents, not an isolated incident."

Mr Ayuso had read out a statement from Havana which warned of "negative consequences" for the U.S. over the incident, and asked what he thought that could mean, he said: "It might affect the future of conversations between the U.S. and Cuba."

Cuba: U.S. Accused of 'Covering Up' Airspace Violation

PA2602215796 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 2024 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Madrid, 26 Feb (NOTIMEX) — Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina today accused the United States of covering up a violation of Cuban airspace and said his country's security must be respected.

In statements at Barajas International Airport, Robaina said the United States has always been aware of violations of Cuban territory and has never done anything, even though it has constantly been warned by Havana authorities.

On the way to New York to participate in a UN meeting, Robaina criticized U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher for not wanting to acknowledge an act of aggression.

Cuba does not issue threats, and it has always been patient, but patience "has its limits," the Cuban foreign minister said. He will be making a stopover in Mexico on the way to UN headquarters in New York.

The United States and Cuba will be presenting to the UN Security Council their versions of Saturday's incident in which two U.S.-registered light planes were downed by the Cuban Air Force for violating Cuban airspace.

The Cessna planes had been chartered by an anti-Castro organization of Miami which, according to its spokesmen, was looking for "rafters" (illegal emigrants) sailing from Cuba to the Florida peninsula.

The Cuban Government's measure "has not been a demonstration of force," said Robaina, who made a stopover in the Spanish capital after interrupting an official visit to Denmark.

"We were afraid it would happen, and we had announced it. Violations of our borders and airspace have been taking place for more than 20 months," Robaina said, insisting that Washington has been notified on diverse occasions to prevent these actions.

Robaina ruled out that the incursions have been sponsored by the United States but "they have been permitted or known" about by the White House, and Warren Christopher "does not know this information or does not want" to acknowledge it.

"Cuban security cannot be transgressed or violated," Robaina added. He confirmed that a pilot detained in Havana "knows what happened," as gleaned from his testimony. The Foreign Ministry in Havana has refrained from confirming whether the detained individual was flying in one of the planes downed on Saturday.

Robaina stressed his government will present at the United Nations material evidence of the violation of the airspace and demanded that, in comparing the versions, Cuba not be treated "as small and poor," because his country has "truth in its hands."

The diplomatic conflict between Cuba and the United States has elicited all kinds of reaction in Spain, where in the midst of the electoral campaign the political parties had different positions on the Cuban situation and Madrid's relations with Havana.

The United Left (IU) coalition, the third most important political force, justified the downing of the planes as an act "of legitimate defense" by Cuba, while the

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conservative Popular Party (PP, main opposition group) accused Havana of "intransigence."

Cuba: Alarcon Reports 'Constant Violations' of Airspace

PA2602224296 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 2205 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Companero Ricardo Alarcon, president of the Cuban parliament, noted during a news conference he is currently holding that there have been constant violations of our airspace. He said that many warnings have been issued to the U.S. Government that these violations could no longer continue and that the Cuban Government could take measures against the violators.

Alarcon said that criminal Orlando Bosch, mastermind of the murder of 73 persons who were on board a plane [el asesinato de 73 personas en vuelo], is walking the streets today without worrying about the justice system. The law must be obeyed, and the weight of the law must fall on that murderer, he said.

The Cuban leader said that the United States has always supported the pirates, as it is doing now. Alarcon also said our country has always heeded principles of integrity and sovereignty.

Expect more statements from Ricardo Alarcon during the news conference in Radio Rebelde's news segments.

Cuba: 'Excerpt' of Alarcon News Conference

PA2602235696 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 2207 GMT 26 Feb 96

["Excerpt" of news conference by Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government, with unidentified reporters in Havana on 26 February — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Unidentified female reporter] In fact, there were witnesses to this event on a cruise ship. An amateur video was filmed in which you could see fire in the area. This cruise ship was sailing in international waters. What does the government have to say in view of this evidence, because supposedly this cruise ship was sailing in international waters, some 20 miles off the Cuban coast? Why were there no warnings? According to international law, warnings have to be made. There should be two or three warnings and flights made near the plane that should supposedly leave the airspace. Why were warnings not made? There are two or three other things, which supposedly international law indicates should be done before firing on a plane.

[Alarcon] [Words indistinct] ...we, of course, have all the conversations between our authorities and the pilots recorded. I am talking about the conversations held before the incident in the afternoon and the ones held the same day of the incident in the morning. They entered, left, came back, and left again. [Words indistinct] arrived in Cuba for the second time.

As for the cruise ship, I saw the pictures over the U.S. television media, and I frankly did not hear anyone say that this was evidence of where the incident took place. It was a video filmed by a person on board a cruise ship; it was a tourist. I did not see fire, but smoke. I could see smoke at a distance, on the horizon.

You said the cruise ship was 20 miles away. I do not know. Perhaps my vision is not as perfect as yours, but I am not able to measure the distance between the smoke and the cruise ship and determine that it was eight miles more or less [words indistinct].

Smoke is something the wind blows. You know, it is something that moves, that explodes; it is a gas. I can tell you that the famous pictures taken by the no-less-famous cruise ship, instead of proving us wrong actually [words indistinct]. Ask the person on the cruise ship if he saw the smoke moving toward the open sea, toward Florida, or toward Cuba. Behind the smoke you would find the plane and behind the plane you would find the incident and [words indistinct].

The most important thing — which is not the decisive thing here — however, the most important thing [repeats himself] is the intention and systematic violation of our sovereignty, the systematic violation of international law, and the systematic violation of U.S. regulations. [Words indistinct] the United States, which as been complaisant or at least tolerant. I would like to [words indistinct], but it is increasingly more like a [words indistinct].

All of this is done [words indistinct] investigated, they come and go, and poor Christopher, who is not precisely an athletic man, [words indistinct] goes before the television cameras to speak of something that had taken place in [words indistinct]. He pronounced a phrase in reference to the repulsive terrorist act that took place in Jerusalem. He (?said) a phrase, a phrase. He talked about the poor, unarmed, humanitarian, civilian plane that had been the target of this incident over international waters. The impression was that this poor gentleman, who perhaps did not even want to do it because he was filling up his suitcase, was leaving for a long trip [words indistinct], had to stand there and tell all of these lies.

Frankly, the government's image is pitiful. We are talking about authorities who supposedly represent a government that intends to have world leadership qualities

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[words indistinct] is behaving like it were aspiring to a post [words indistinct].

[Reporter] [passage indistinct]

[Alarcon] I can tell you that we are prepared and that we have never stopped preparing ourselves. We are dealing with an adversary that is not only the most militarily powerful country on the planet but that is also very close to us, too close. It has maintained a permanent aggressive policy since the victory of the revolution, and [words indistinct] adventurism, irresponsibility, and superficiality, seem to be a invariable tradition in the exercise of this country's policy. However, we are and will continue to be prepared and will increasingly become more prepared. [words indistinct]

[Reporter] Alarcon, your comments regarding Clinton's measures seem to indicate that they will not affect Cuba very much. Can I infer this? Is this so?

[Alarcon] I believe the measures, evidently, are part [words indistinct]. (?Mr. Campbell), we have to get a bit into the American [word indistinct] where the mission of a statesman is mixed with the work of cheap [words indistinct]. Unfortunately, this is how it is. Up to what point, up to what point [repeats himself] are we confronting a redesigned policy, as the last journalist just mentioned? Or, are we simply, as other political personalities do, [words indistinct]? This, of course, can never be discounted in the United States. Now, there are several things I believe are important. I [words indistinct], with regards to calling the CIA chief for consultations and [words indistinct]. Well, I would say: So what? [words indistinct] be done by a diplomat. To indefinitely suspend commercial flights seems to refer to flights to Cuba. It must be flights [words indistinct].

To spend more money on Marti Radio and Television is to continue with an insolent policy that disrespects international norms. But, well, they have been doing this for many years and spending a lot of money on this.

I have already referred to the point of restricting the movement of Cuban diplomats in the United States. The movements of the diplomats are based on the practice [words indistinct] the principle of reciprocity.

On freezing the funds sent to relatives, I suppose this was taken away from us a long time ago. I don't know why it has been allowed recently. To present charges at the UN Security Council, Bolanos already referred to this topic.

Perhaps, perhaps the most interesting point in the report I have before me, is that it will ask to work with Congress to increase actions against Cuba in the context of the Helms-Burton bill. We regret it, if this means that the so-called opposition to this project, which we could more or less imagine was maintained by the administration, will be changed, and it will join the supporters, as they did with the Torricelli law, if it wants to take advantage of this incident to further objectives that will allegedly yield some sort of electoral effectiveness.

We are prepared to live with or without the Helms law.

Cuba: Press Reports Clinton's 'Unilateral Measures'

PA2602231196 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 2215 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 26 Feb (PL) — President Bill Clinton this afternoon anounced new unilateral measures to reinforce the blockade against Cuba, using as a pretext the downing of two light planes that violated Cuban airspace on Saturday.

Clinton read a brief statement to the press accredited to the White House to announce six additional punitive steps against the Caribbean island.

The United States assumed the right to ask the United Nations to consider sanctions against Cuba until the Caribbean nation compensates the relatives of the crews of the two planes that overflew Cuban territorial waters and that were downed after several warnings to leave the area.

The Clinton administration will ask Congress to freeze Cuban assets in the United States, while waiting for what he called compensation from the Cuban Government for the loss of the lives of the pilots who violated its airspace.

In the same way, the U.S. executive branch will cooperate with Congress to reinforce the more than 30-year-old blockade, in accordance with the Helms—Burton legislation, by virtue of which companies from third countries that negotiate with Cuba are threatened with punishment.

The movement of Cuban diplomats residing on U.S. soil will be restricted, and the entry visas for those requesting them from Cuba will be limited, Clinton stated.

The chief of state will also ask his country's Congress to increase funds for the so-called Radio Marti, a station that has broadcast subversive propaganda against Cuba for several years.

All charter flights from the United States to Cuba will be suspended for an indefinite period, the President said,

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as he proclaimed he does not rule out more severe measures, if necessary.

After his brief statement, Clinton walked away from the podium, from which he spoke in the gardens of the Oval Office, ignoring all questions from journalists gathered there.

Cuba: U.S. Said 'Distorting Truth' on Aircraft Downing

PA2602232896 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 2223 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 26 Feb (PL) — Ricardo Alarcon, president of the Cuban National Assembly of the People's Government, today accused the U.S. Government of distorting the truth about the downing of two pirate aircraft by the Cuban Air Force.

During a news conference held in this capital, Alarcon detailed various contacts requested by high-ranking U.S. Government officials to coordinate recovery and salvage work with local authorities in the island's jurisdictional waters for the aircraft shot down on Saturday.

He said the statements made by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher — aimed at distorting information that, he emphasized, the high-ranking diplomat should know perfectly well — were quite surprising.

The parliamentary leader emphasized: Christopher should know that the aircraft was flying over Cuban territory and that the event occurred over our waters.

He also wondered why, if it is insisting that the incident occurred in international waters, U.S. Government representatives had established contact with Cuban parties in this capital since Saturday.

He said that on Saturday 24 February Joseph Sullivan, chief of the U.S. Interests Section (SINA), requested — reportedly with the knowledge of his superiors — authorization for the U.S. Coast Guard to enter Cuban territorial waters and participate in the rescue activities.

Alarcon added: Also, that same night, Anne Patterson, deputy assistant secretary of state, met with Cuban Ambassador in Washington [title as received] Fernando Remirez de Estenoz to again discuss the issue.

On Sunday, he added, contacts continued with Sullivan in Havana and Patterson in the U.S. capital, for the sake of seeing what possibility there was of cooperating over the rescue work.

"This is a fact they cannot deny," Alarcon remarked.

He insisted that U.S. authorities assert the incident occurred in international waters, but they have not been able to find a thing.

However, we have found some evidence in our waters, in our territory, and we have in our hands objects from those airplanes, proving everything occurred in the area under our jurisdiction, he asserted.

Moreover, he added that the U.S. Government had received a long list of airspace and naval violations perpetrated by groups of exiles against Cuban territory during the last two or three years.

Our patience has a limit, he emphasized; he then mentioned the cooperation requested by U.S. justice officials in a trial against Jose Basulto, head of the anti-Cuban group Brothers to the Rescue, who has admitted responsibility for similar actions in recent months.

Alarcon even mentioned a note in which the U.S. secretary of state expressed his gratitude to Cuba for granting this request.

Cuba: Alarcon Reacts to Statement by U.S. President

PA2702020996 Havana CHTV Television in Spanish 2315 GMT 26 Feb 96

["Focus on Havana" program with host Sandra Hernandez and guest reporter Roberto Cavada]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hernandez] I am now going to talk to reporter Roberto Cavada, who covered a news conference by Comrade Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government [ANPP], on last Saturday's events for "Focus on Havana." Cavada, this news conference was convened today at noon.

[Cavada] This conference was convened at noon, and all national and international reporters accredited here in Havana were invited. Many reporters, large U.S. television networks, and many newspapers — which have also expressed interest in the opinion of Cuba and the government of the Republic of Cuba — have come from abroad.

During this news conference, ANPP President Ricardo Alarcon elaborated on these events, which Cuban public opinion knew about from the first moment. Last 24 February, at approximately 1500, two Cessna aircraft from a military base, an air base in southern Florida, Opa Locka, violated Cuban airspace, entered Cuban jurisdictional waters in spite of the warnings issued by the Cuban Air Force and the government of the Republic.

They were downed in Cuban territorial waters, and this is what the news conference held by ANPP President Alarcon was all about.

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Once more, Alarcon told national and international public opinion that the U.S. Government was absolutely responsible for this incident. He stated:

[Begin Alarcon recording, broadcast in progress] ...because if we are going to talk now, one must see how often, how frequently, how repeatedly they have ignored every norm. This is something no state can tolerate. It is of course regrettable that an object such as a small plane disappears, breaks. It is regrettable that there has been loss of human life. But who is responsible? Us, because we make law and order prevail, or those who — knowing that these people are violating the laws and their own norms, knowing who they are, knowing which their aircraft are — have let them come in and out fleely until the day before yesterday.

If we are going to talk about responsibilities and if they want to talk about it at the UN Security Council or wherever they want, the greater responsibility, together with the perpetrators of the provocation, falls on those who are irresponsible and who lead a government incapable of making their own laws be respected. In the story of this issue, the United States has not opposed piracy, but has favored it. In the story of this problem, the United States has not sided with the humanitarian feelings but against them. It has either covered up or favored piracy.

It is also doing it now. The rest is pure hypocrisy and pure second-rate electoral demagoguery.

Our country acts with a different style, with a different way of doing things. Our country does believe in something that seems to have disappeared in the United States long ago, which is principles. [end recording]

[Cavada] These were the first statements made by Alarcon. These statements were very precise, very serious, of course. He evidently stressed that the U.S. Government has always sided with pirates instead of against them. He made a specific reference. He recalled how closely this affects us. Precisely, he noted that one of the famous terrorists who currently wanders about Miami, Florida, is Orlando Bosch. He and others join hands with these ultra-rightist groups to somehow block relations between the two governments and criticize us for this right we exercised of preserving our territorial integrity.

Bosch is one of the masterminds of the Barbados crime, the bombing of a Cubana de Aviacion airplane which transported, aside from our sports delegation that took part in the Central American games, civilians, children, and youngsters. This was one of the most horrendous attacks in the Caribbean. This gentleman, who masterminded the above attack and was tried, wanders freely about the streets of Miami.

Nevertheless, Orlando Bosch was taken to the United States by President Bush. He was given housing and residence there, knowing the crime he had perpetrated. In addition, another gentleman named Luis Posada Carriles — who is an outlaw from Venezuelan justice and has also lived in the United States — is currently residing in a Central American country living with impunity, and nobody worries about this terrorist, who may perpetrate a new terrorist attack. In fact, he stated he would launch new attacks against Cuba.

Alarcon also talked about U.S. ties with piracy and terrorism.

He recalled that when he was Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, he presented the case of the attack on the Cubana airlines plane at the UN Security Council and that attack was ignored and shelved. At this time, there are consultations to address Saturday's incident, but the Security Council, in addition to not dealing with other cases....[pauses] Well, it also ignored another one that was very unfortunate and serious for the Caribbean area and for air transportation. That was the Cubana de Aviacion airplane, a civilian plane.

But in addition to this plane, this act of terrorism, Alarcon cited the example of the Iranian plane that in 1988 was downed by the U.S. Government, killing close to 290 people. Alarcon confirmed to the media and national public opinion today that the U.S. Government has not compensated even the families of these victims.

[Hernandez] I would like to ask you, Cavada, how the information on the search for the wreckage has been handled?

[Cavada] Of the Cessna planes on Saturday?

[Hernandez] Yes.

[Cavada] Well, regarding this, the search is continuing. Alarcon confirmed that all information will be provided, as has been done, not only in this case but others. We have had explanations from the beginning. You remember the first note from Minrex [Ministry of Foreign Relations] on Saturday [as heard]. Minrex published another note today, referring to statements by Secretary of State Warren Christopher. We also have other notes and data. Alarcon has always said — and he reiterated today — that Cuba has all the information, even recordings of the communications, and that this information will be given at the opportune moment and that as much as necessary will be provided. He advanced something to the media and, of course, to public opinion. Here is an excerpt of Alarcon:

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[Begin Alarcon recording] We have spoken a lot about whether they were inside or outside Cuba. We have found something in Cuba. The North Americans, with all their fleet, with all their (?deployment) have yet to find anything in international waters. Remember my friends that in this zone there is a natural phenomenon that I imagine is known in U.S. schools and that is called the Gulf Stream, the Gulf Stream [previous two words in English].

In any case, the logical thing is that any object that is in the waters of the Straits will move further to the north. The Gulf Stream begins in the Gulf and ends at the Norwegian coast. There are times that this phenomenon can change, when the air masses come from the north. But as all you know, in the past week we have been enjoying a high pressure area, almost without wind and with a calm sea; therefore, this phenomenon has not existed. But in any case, if an object falls into the sea on a day like today in the zone of the Gulf or the Straits, if the waters move it in a direction, it will be away from the Cuban coast, not the other way around. Nevertheless, it is Cuba that has found something and the United States has yet to find anything. All of this helps underline how much inside the Cuban borders the incident occurred. [end recording]

[Cavada] There are other evidence and truths about this case.

[Hernandez] Of course. You know, Cavada, before coming down to the studio I saw a report that President Clinton was holding a news conference.

[Cavada] That is right. Almost at the same time that this news conference was being held by Assembly President Alarcon this afternoon at the international press center in Havana, President William Clinton was holding a similar news conference on this topic of the two Cessna planes downed by the Cuban Air Force when they were invading Cuban airspace. President Clinton was speaking at the Oval Office and was announcing six measures that Assembly President Alarcon quickly received at his table as he was addressing the media. As he listed them, Alarcon commented on them. These are the measures the people of the capital are hearing first from CHTV.

[Begin Alarcon recording] One, request Cuba's condemnation from the UN Security Council and the international community. Two, request that the United Nations and the international community adopt sanctions against Cuba until the Cuban Government compensates the families of the downed pilots. Three, request the frozen assets for the compensation for the four families. They cannot freeze them further. These funds have been for a long time in deep frost [previous two words in English]. They can use the funds that they snatched from us more than 35 years ago, they can use them for this, but I do not know what they can freeze further.

To indefinitely suspend commercial flights. I don't know what this means because....[pauses] Does this mean they are going to stop the U.S. companies that fly over Cuban corridors thousands of times a year? Almost all the U.S. citizens who travel to South America have to fly over Cuba. They have to contact our authorities. They have excellent relations with our Civil Aeronautics. There has never been any problem, and this has benefited the North Americans. They will now have to cross the entire Caribbean to get to South America.

Those are the U.S. commercial flights that fly over Cuba. There are no commercial flights to Cuba. There are charter [previous word in English] flights to Cuba. A few companies have been authorized to make charter flights on special occasions, mainly to bring people of Cuban origin who live in the United States.

The suspension of the commercial flights, I don't know if it is...[pauses] Because as I also mentioned, this point is related to this other thing [not further identified]. It really should be the other way around. They should be the ones concerned that commercial flights — both the charters as well as all the others that pass through the Straits and that go through the Havana corridor to go to the South or from South to North — be able to fly peacefully and without fear, risks of encountering incidents, and threats of the type we are currently assessing.

[Word indistinct] to restrict trade and the movement of Cuban diplomats in the United States. Trade. I know from my own experience that the United States has arbitrarily and capriciously limited the movement of Cuban diplomats in the United States, of our personnel at the United Nations for many years. It has done so without any right and by arbitrarily establishing its authority as the base country. Of course, in diplomacy, there is something called reciprocity, and they know this. The one who restricts must get accustomed to knowing that he will be restricted.

The truth is that there are Cubans who feel inclined, not so much to restrict the North American diplomats, but to remind them that they are diplomats — at least they appear to be diplomats — and not subversive agents who are dedicated to furthering actions to hinder our country's progress. They are not to go around, as they do, in their diplomatic cars taking alleged opponents and trying to make them highly visible [meterselos hasta en la sopa] to all visitors who come to this country, organizing meetings for an alleged opposition

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and independent voters, which as practice shows, really depend entirely on the U.S. Government.

They have their offices at the Malecon but their bosses are the North American diplomats. They are going [words indistinct] let us see what they do with our diplomats in the United States. In any case, with or without restrictions, the diplomats here should start to behave adequately, independently of this incident and of what Washington is going to do.

To increase the budget of Radio Marti and other U.S. information services. Oh, of TV Marti too. I believe the United States has the right to do this. This is a government that is dedicated to spending money that does not belong to it. It is the taxpayers' money. They have spent many millions and can and will continue to do so on those two programs. They say they are going to recall the chief of the U.S. Interest Office in Cuba for temporary consultations. [end recording]

Cuba: Alarcon on 'Illegal' Activities of Brothers Group

PA2702002796 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 2329 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 26 Feb (PL) — Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government, today said that that his government will demonstrate in due time evidence that the counterrevolutionary organization Brothers to the Rescue does not carry out legitimate civilian or humanitarian activities.

In a news conference held in this capital, Alarcon told domestic and foreign reporters that this Miami-based group that had two planes downed last Saturday when they entered Cuban airspace, have repeatedly violated international laws and Cuban sovereignty.

The pilots of the anti-Cuban group, Alarcon insisted, violated international laws, probably U.S. laws, and the sovereignty of Cuba.

He remarked that U.S. authorities must know that these individuals have promoted for years illegal emigration, an action that also involves drug trafficking and the threat to the security of U.S. passengers who fly over the Havana corridor, close to the place where the incident took place on Saturday, 24 February.

The actions of the so-called Brothers to the Rescue are condemnable because they flew illegally to Cuba and carried out an unauthorized trip from one country to another. That is something that must be stopped, he noted, while criticizing Washington's inaction in the face of these events.

"We are faced with a clear provocation, about which the U.S. Government was perfectly informed," Alarcon stressed. He later stressed that White House authorities cannot affirm that the pilots flew unarmed, because they did not contact them before their departure from Miami for the island.

Alarcon reiterated that Cuba also has material evidence obtained from the planes downed in Cuba's jurisdictional waters, a pilot from Brothers to the Rescue, who will allow authorities to provide important evidence in due time.

Cuba, Alarcon insisted, has evidence "corroborating the existence of a plane downed in a specific location."

Alarcon also criticized U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher for "hurriedly" making distorted statements on the events, and he denounced the fact that Orlando Bosch, mastermind of an in-flight explosion on a Cuban aircraft in the vicinity of Barbados in 1976, which killed over 70 people, is living illegally in the United States.

Cuba: Robaina Says Nation 'Will Not Accept Threats'

BR2702100296 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1811 GMT 26 Feb 96

[Unattributed report: "Robaina: Cuban Security Cannot Be Insulted or Violated"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Madrid, 26 Feb (EFE) — Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina said today that Cuba had given "a lesson in patience" but that this has a "limit because Cuban security cannot be insulted or violated."

Speaking at Madrid's Barajas Airport where he was in transit to New York, Robaina referred to yesterday's shooting down by Cuban aircraft of two U.S. planes believed to have violated Cuban airspace.

Robaina stated that this shooting down "was not a show of strength" nor had there been "any tactical error." He will say the same to the UN Security Council in New York where he is now going after interrupting his official visit to Copenhagen (Denmark).

The minister said: "We feared this and had announced it. Our frontiers and airspace have been violated for more than 20 months now." He stated: "The North American authorities had been warned to stop this action."

Regarding his appearance before the UN Security Council, he said that he was going because "there cannot be just one view of the problem" and that there is "a long list of actions illustrating this kind of behavior and which, if it has not sponsored them, the U.S. Administration at least did know about them and let them continue."

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He added: "It would appear that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is not aware of this or he does not want to admit it."

Asked whether the aircraft had been in Cuban or international airspace, the minister answered that the Americans themselves "asked us if they could enter Cuban waters to see where the planes had gone down, which proves that the United States is not sure in whose waters this incident occurred."

He stated: "We have proof and evidence from the people involved and we have a statement from a pilot who was flying a few hours before the incident and knows what happened."

Faced with possible U.S. or UN reprisals against Cuba, Robaina said: "My country will not accept threats from anyone."

The minister stressed that "they cannot treat us like a poor, little country. We are not a superpower like the United States, but when truth is on its side even the smallest country becomes a major power."

Cuba: Embassy, Opposition Leader in Panama View Incident

PA2602174996 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 26 Feb 96 p A2

[Report by Jose Quintero De Leon]

[FBIS Translated Text] The downing of two pirate planes off the coast of Havana should serve as a warning to those who are encouraging and carrying out those actions, which only contribute to increase tension between the United States and Cuba, according to communique issued yesterday by the Cuban Embassy in Panama.

"The responsibility for the measures that the Cuban Government had to adopt now in keeping with its sacred and steadfast duty to defend its national sovereignty lies on those who on repeated occasions ignored the warnings and persisted in their irresponsible adventures," the document stressed.

According to the Cuban Embassy, on 24 February Cuban fighter planes downed two Cessna-type pirate planes that departed from Opalocka, Florida state. The document added that once again those aircraft violated Cuban airspace over territorial waters and that they were located between five and eight miles north of Playa Barraca, west of Havana.

The provocation by "terrorist groups that have their hideouts in Florida" occurred on the day Cuba was commemorating the 101st anniversary of the beginning of the Independence War of 1895 and when people in the capital were preparing to celebrate Carnival, the document noted.

"In the same manner, our authorities have informed us that the U.S. Government on various occasions of similar violating activities that have been taking place. Our diplomatic note number 45 dated 16 January 1996 was our most recent notification," the communique disclosed.

Meanwhile, Raymond Molina, a Cuban opposed to Castro and representative of the "Independent Cuban Unity" ["Unidad Cubana Independiente"] said that he hopes the Latin American people will finally awaken and condemn the forceful and barbaric acts carried out by the dictator Fidel Castro, such as the recent downing of two civilian light aircraft and the death of their four crew members.

Molina referred to the attack against two planes of the Cuban exile foundation "Brothers to the Rescue," with headquarters in Key West, Florida, while flying 32 km off Havana over international waters.

"It is time for Latin American people to awaken and contribute to the ousting of that pirate who continues to oppress the Cuban people," Molina stressed. He noted that if the Panamanian Government is truly democratic, it should condemn those actions.

"Brothers to the Rescue" is a humanitarian organization patrolling the Florida Strait waters to inform the U.S. Coast and helicopters when they detect Cuban rafters risking their lives to leave Cuba seeking liberty and better living conditions.

Molina said that in his opinion the order to down two planes that were carrying out humanitarian operations in international waters does not show courage; it shows that Castro is competing with Iraqi dictator Saddam Husayn in carrying out barbaric actions and that he has no interest whatsoever in democratizing Cuba.

Nevertheless, Molina said that with this new aberration, Fidel is losing control, especially now that people are no longer afraid of him and therefore he is trying to repress them and curtail their freedom of expression.

"He must be overthrown by force, because he is subjugating Cubans to excruciating levels," said the Cuban opposition leader, who resides in Panama.

He said, however, that he hopes that the protests the United States will present before the United Nations states will result in sanctions against the Cuban regime, and that this obviously criminal action will serve to pressure the government to democratize the island.

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Regarding measures that could be adopted to accelerate Castro's downfall, Molina said that he is convinced that Cuba must be totally blocked, as was done with Haiti to oust Raoul Cedras from power.

Unless President Clinton assumes a firmer attitude toward the Castro regime, we believe the Republican majority in the U.S. Congress and Senate will have good arguments to contest his reelection in the next electoral campaign," Molina stressed.

Cuba: Russian Reaction to Plane Downing Incident

PA2702050196 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 2100 GMT 26 Feb 96

[From the "Cuban Newscast"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russia has described as a provocation the violations of Cuban airspace and called on Washington to adopt specific actions to avoid such incidents. It called on the UN Security Council to learn of Havana's points of view on the topic and regretted the loss of human lives.

The French Government as well as the European community, however, aligned themselves with the U.S. position and condemned the Cuban decision to defend its sovereignty, accepting the fact that the downed planes were not inside the island's territory as can be proven by the evidence submitted by Cuba today to the national and international media, including dozens of special U.S. media correspondents, who arrived in Havana in the last few hours.

Cuba: Cuban Radio Reports Clinton's Announcement

PA2702015596 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 0000 GMT 27 Feb 96

[From the "Evening Information Review" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. President William Clinton has announced a series of unilateral political, economic, and diplomatic measures against Cuba in reprisal for the downing of two U.S. planes that violated the island's airspace.

Despite international condemnation, Clinton said in a news conference that Washington will ask Congress to approve the Helms-Burton bill to toughen the blockade, which the United States has imposed on Cuba for more than 30 years and which has inflicted more than $40 billion worth of losses on the island.

Clinton also said his government will ask that Cuba be condemned by the UN Security Council and that Cuban funds that have been frozen in the United States as a result of the blockade be used to compensate — as he put it — the relatives of the pilots. He also announced the suspension of all commercial flights between the United States and Cuba and said the movement of Cuban diplomats in U.S. territory will be restricted.

Finally, the U.S. President said more money will be allocated to bolster the transmissions of the anti-Cuban Radio Marti station.

Cuba: Radio Employees Vow To Confront Media 'War'

PA2702021196 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 0000 GMT 27 Feb 96

[From the "Evening Information Review" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cuba radio station employees reaffirmed their support for the revolutionary government in a letter sent to Cuban President Fidel Castro on 26 February.

In the letter, Cuban radio station employees expressed their firm support for last Saturday's defensive action in which Cuban planes shot down two pirate planes that violated our airspace and sovereignty.

The Cuban radio station employees called for an end to Washington's pharisaical policy against the island and to the impunity of terrorist groups in U.S. territory.

In their letter to the Cuban head of state, the employees reaffirmed their determination to continue to confront the cynical radio and television war against the island.

Cuba: Alarcon Says Incident Affects Migratory Accord

PA2702041496 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cubavision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Interview with Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government, by Irma Caceres — live or recorded; from the "NTV" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Caceres] Good evening, Alarcon. Welcome to our newscast. You are also chief of the Cuban delegation to the various migration talks between Cuba and the United States.

Alarcon, why are you saying there is an evident and public contradiction between what the United States says, the initial search of planes in Cuban territorial waters, and the statements saying the planes were shot down in international waters?

[Alarcon] Frankly, it is difficult for me and for us to explain that. It is something that may be unusual for any Cuban. I am talking about the inconsistency between what they say and do. Unfortunately, that

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is part of how that country's policy works. That is unfortunate. The truth is — as I explained in the news conference — Mr. Christopher knows more than anyone else on this planet that those planes had violated our airspace. Otherwise, who instructed Mr. Sullivan in Havana to request permission for U.S. Coast Guard ships to participate in the search for the remains of the planes in our waters? Why did he reiterate it?

He asked for permission at 1930 on Saturday, 24 February. Why did he call the Minrex [Cuban Foreign Ministry] again that night with the same request?

Why did the U.S. assistant secretary of state call our ambassador [title as heard], Companero Remirez, to talk again about coordination to seek the remains of the plane, where they knew the incident had taken place, inside Cuban territorial waters?

Something happened. Something happened later, and they decided to become accomplices of the provocation committed by these individuals of the Brothers to the Rescue group. I do not know if they had participated in this since the beginning or if they joined in later on. The only explanation is that they had cooperated, if not fully participated in the incidents. It is a real provocation against Cuba.

[Caceres] Do you think this could be considered an isolated incident to create electoral results or is this part of a new escalation against Cuba?

[Alarcon] Well, many people believe that all of what is taking place in the United States these days is part of the electoral appetite of politicians. It is really something that you often find in the U.S. media, in the television media. Every time someone is interviewed, the interviewer alludes to that and does not ask the question the way you do. They base themselves on the premise that all the things politicians say or do are in keeping with their electoral aspirations, which does not necessarily mean they want more votes, but more money to buy votes, which is the essence of the U.S. system.

This can be explained by the fact that in Miami there are a few gentlemen who appear to have money, and these gentlemen have certain interests with regard to Cuba, which are very specific, very clear: To defeat the revolution and take possession of this country once again. These gentlemen are willing to give money to a government, which has unfortunately adopted a position that is not very serious. The duty of a government leader is not to be conducting petty political maneuvers to be reelected. Someday he has to govern and fulfill the mandate he was given. This administration gives the impression that it is constantly doing things for the sake of petty electoral gains. It could just so happen that, while playing this game, its own dynamics will lead it down a path of greater confrontation, a worsening of the problems between the two countries. That would be unfortunate, but they must not be confused.

Our policy is based on principles and on more solid reasons than theirs. Of course, we are in condition to face any type of threat or action from the empire. We would be ready whether the threat or action stems from a small, provincial electoral plan or from a plan of a greater magnitude. I am sure we are in condition to face it successfully.

[Caceres] President William Clinton announced this afternoon a series of measures on Cuba, including the reduction in charter flights to Cuba, the reduction...

[Alarcon, interrupting] The suspension, the suspension.

[Caceres] The suspension, the suspension. Yes.

[Alarcon] Indefinitely.

[Caceres] Aha. The reduction in Cuban diplomats' movements in the United States, working for the approval of the Helms-Burton bill. Do these measures affect the essence of the migratory agreements between Cuba and the United States?

[Alarcon] Yes, they do in a certain way because, above all, they go against the spirit of those agreements, just as the agreements are affected by the fact that the U.S. Government has come out right now as defender, as a champion of those individuals — who have been violating the migratory agreement, among other things.

I explained here a while ago, as the viewers saw, that these individuals have been engaged in the promotion of illegal migration to the United States. Likewise, the implementation of those agreements should correspond to a spirit, a willingness that this policy evidently contradicts completely. Irma, you must also remember what we have always said about the prohibition of trips between Cuba and the United States.

The prohibitions imposed by President Clinton on 20 August 1994 contradicted the spirit and essence of this agreement, because you cannot pretend there is a normal flow, a normal bilateral relationship while simultaneously preventing people from visiting their relatives, or traveling for a brief time. U.S. immigration laws and the law of any country in the world do not just talk about definite migration. To migrate means to travel from one place to another, and this does not have to be forever; it must also involve temporary travel. Trips were unnecessarily and unfairly prohibited on 20 August, creating tremendous problems for many people; and now they do the same thing again.

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I understand, I have heard that he met with Mas Canosa and some of these people in Miami, just as he did in August. Incidentally, what the sovereign President of the United States decided to do is what everyone knows were the same things that this Miami mafia has demanded — a suspension of trips, an increase in radio aggression.

They have added this issue of the limit to the movements of our diplomats, and they must obviously realize that any restriction, any measure applied against our diplomatic representation in the United States will not be answered with flowers in Havana. Diplomacy is based on reciprocity.

Incidentally, their diplomats here should restrict their own actions, rather than waiting until we do it, and they should dedicate themselves to the exercise of diplomacy rather than what many of them are doing, meaning dedicating themselves to subversion and conspiracy against our society. The flagrant violation of diplomatic activities is not tolerated or admitted anywhere in the world.

The most recent development is that it gives the impression they would support, accept, or seek a settlement with Helms and Burton on their famous bill, which is currently under discussion. Listen, we have been discussing this for I do not know how many months. It is like the story of the sweetheart who pulled one petal after the other, and said, he does, he doesn't. I veto, I do not veto. I oppose, I do not oppose.

It is one of the great U.S. mysteries. What will the President do? Will he be against or will he accept the Helms-Burton bill? Of course, Mas Canoso asked him not to veto the bill and to give it his support. The impression now is that he will accept it. When he was a candidate for the presidency in 1992, the President was also very vocal in backing what was later to become the Torricelli law and, to a certain extent, was mainly responsible for getting this law approved.

I think this does not change things, absolutely not. The Helms- Burton law, as well as the Torricelli law, cannot be implemented for the simple reason that the world is not willing to acquiesce to U.S. policy. The United States tries to strengthen the blockade, but the only thing that increases are UN votes against the blockade. It is quite alone on this issue; it cannot be more isolated at the United Nations.

This situation is not going to change regardless of how many laws they implement.

If, at this point, the President has taken the last petal off the daisy and decided, for the time being, for the time being [repeats himself] to take this position, I quite frankly say: That's his business. I do not think he will gain much by identifying himself with the most reactionary ultra-rightist sector in the United States. He will lose international prestige. He will not gain recognition or the respect of the people because, in general, when the world thinks of a statesman it takes into consideration attributes such as consistency, coherence, and personal beliefs.

[Caceres] Those who do not know the United States would think that this government has always acted legally, and it is saying Cuba acted illegally in this case. What is your opinion on this?

[Alarcon] The thing is that there is a U.S. rule or policy and that is that it can use lies as you can drink a glass of water. I want to repeat what I said at the news conference. The United States knew this group was violating, not only international law and Cuba's sovereignty, but also U.S. regulations.

It is incredible that Christopher has forgotten that his department wrote to us, put it in black and white, on 28 August 1995. The diplomatic note informed us that the U.S. Federal Aviation Authority had initiated an investigation against Mr. Basulto and his group for violations of international law and U.S. regulations. In October of that same year, it informed us that in addition to that investigation or, I imagine, as a sequel to that investigation, the U.S. federal agency in question had presented charges against Mr. Basulto and his group for violating U.S. air regulations. It asked Cuban authorities, in writing, in an official note, for its cooperation in furthering the case against Mr. Basulto. Afterwards, it sent us a third note on this specific issue to thank us for sending the requested documents and reiterated that charges were being pressed.

Is it or is it not true that the group had violated international law as well as U.S. regulations? The most important question that comes to mind is: What did they do with those charges? So, this group of people — whom they had investigated for violating U.S. aviation regulations and as a result of those investigations, had presented charges against them — can come and go at their airports?

U.S. agency officials themselves authorize their movements, and the group makes several further violations, even before the ones we are mentioning. All the violations made by this group were reported to the North Americans; they were totally informed of those actions, until the one that took place on Saturday.

The Cuban party does not only adhere to international law, to national laws, but it also adheres and is ruled by something that is almost unknown to U.S. politicians: It

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is called adherence to principles, consistency, policy of principles, and, I would even say, self-respect. This is something that a decent politician should always have.

[Caceres] Alarcon, Cuba has received a great deal of support. Its policy and the work done in the country have received authentic support at the United Nations. However, the United States wants to use the Security Council against Cuba. What does Cuba expect from the UN Security Council?

[Alarcon] Well, we have to be realistic. We should not expect much from the UN Security Council. Don't forget that the Security Council operates on a system that gives a privilege to five members of this organization, the veto. You have to have the consent of the five permanent members to get something approved in this organization. To top it all, the Security Council is presided over by Ambassador Albright of the United States of America this month.

By the way, it should have a minimum of class. I, too, was a Security Council member and got to preside over it. In the name of Cuba, I too had to present charges against the United States for aggressions against a Cuban vessel in the Gulf of Mexico. However, I resorted to an article in the Council's regulation that they have not recalled [word indistinct] of Yankee diplomacy. I withdrew from the presidency and gave it to the country that followed. This, of course, is included in the Council's regulations to compensate for the veto privilege and at least to give the appearance of having a degree of balance, of equity in handling the issues.

We now have this lady as president of the Council, and she summoned it because her government decided to do so. She called the ambassadors on Sunday night and made them go listen to their lies. They are now trying to get the Council members to issue some sort of declaration or reach some type of agreement.

Anyway, I do not believe it will be easy for them to get something approved by the Council because, even if the North Americans do not conceive it, not everyone there will react obediently. They will not accept the foolishness they are trying to impose. People will not swallow those flagrant lies easily.

In any case, what we cannot hope to achieve is for the Security Council to do us justice, that it will punish the true culprits — the Yankees — and not echo U.S. propaganda in any way.

By the way, now that we are talking about civil aviation, the Security Council has had, for several years, an accusation presented by Cuba. Unfortunately, it has not been able to reach a satisfactory conclusion precisely because of the veto threat.

It was precisely our country that presented the charges to this organization when the terrorist, Orlando Bosch, the intellectual author of the bombing of the Cuban airplane in Barbados, was admitted in the United States. He was pardoned by President Bush, who allowed him to live in Miami. This is where he currently resides, even though there are very strong accusations against him for the very serious and most monstrous crime ever committed against civil aviation in the Caribbean: The bombing of that plane.

Of course, Cubans have not forgotten the incident and, this year, it will be 20 years since that brutal sabotage was committed. The charges presented by Cuba to the Council are at the Council. It has all the information and evidence on how the North Americans themselves, U.S. judicial authorities, admitted at that time, that this man was a terrorist and had to be expelled from the United States. However, Bush....

[Caceres, interrupting] This man is parading around everywhere.

[Alarcon] No, he must now be together with Basulto and the rest, wailing, protesting, complaining, and calling for stronger measures against his country. And, Christopher is in Central America. There he will have a chance to talk to Luis Posada Carriles, the other killer who is a fugitive from Venezuelan justice as it convicted him for that sabotage. He has been free in Central America for a long time. The last news placed him, I believe, in Honduras. There he continues to murder and practice terrorism, which is the only thing he knows how to do.

[Words indistinct] the powerful can sometimes feel encouraged, especially after the downfall of Eastern Europe and the disappearance of the USSR, which was sort of a leverage for that force. Anyway, the United States cannot impose their will or frighten Cubans or the entire world. They also cannot and have not been able to oblige any country on this planet to accept the economic blockade against us.

[Caceres] According to satellite news, Warren Christopher has made new statements in El Salvador. He said that, in addition to the measures announced by President Clinton, the United States reserves the right to use force against Cuba when it deems it pertinent and opportune — he used those words. What is your opinion of this statement?

[Alarcon] Well, I think Christopher, who is renowned for his restraint and has a very austere personality, must have been bitten by some sort of bug in the past days, because he is too talkative. First, last Sunday, when he told all those lies about the incident. I do not know if he has had any strange encounters in Central America

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and if those might have inspired him to make this type of statement. He said he did not exclude the possibility of resorting to the use of force, military force, etc.

I ask myself if he has suggested this idea or if he has asked anyone in North American about this. I ask myself if they, who are so concerned with electoral issues, really, really [repeats himself] want to appear before U.S. voters making boasts of [word indistinct]. Have they forgotten that if something worries the immense majority of the U.S. population there is the possibility that their country could get militarily involved abroad? The operation in Haiti cost them a lot.

Right now, President Clinton must be worried about the possibility that the Bosnian situation could get complicated and open a big hole in his electoral campaign. And, Cuba would be a much tougher bone to gnaw.

He should listen to the U.S. officers, the former officers who came to Cuban recently, because all those gentlemen, who do know what they are talking about, call for more normal relations, and the last thing they would want is to have a military confrontation with Cuba. Anyway, anyway [repeats himself] we, without bragging, without talking as much as Mr. Christopher, can say that we are prepared. We must continue to be prepared and must always be prepared. This will be a reminder to Cubans. As long as the basic U.S. attitude toward Cuba does not change, the leaning of a government, an official who seems to be more liberal, etc., etc., is unimportant. We cannot lower our guard. We always have to be conscious that this resource of using force against Cuba can be taken into consideration at any time.

[Caceres] Well, Alarcon, I think we have taken too much of your time in this newscast because....

[Alarcon, interrupting] [words indistinct]

[Caceres] No, I know television viewers have appreciated all your statements and the report on Cuba's position regarding those events. So, thank you very much for being with us.

[Alarcon] Thank you.

Cuba: Alarcon Blames U.S., Comments on Clinton Measures

PA2702013396 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 0013 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 26 Feb (PL) — Ricardo Alarcon, president of the Cuban National Assembly of the People's Government, today accused the United States of being mainly responsible for the incidents that led to the downing of two airplanes violating Cuban airspace on Saturday.

Talking to PRENSA LATINA, Alarcon said "the irresponsible ones who are incapable of enforcing their own laws" have the basic culpability. He was referring to the impunity with which the groups that advocate violent actions against the island move about in the United States.

After stressing tnat U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has repeatedly lied about the characteristics of the incident, he explained that one proof of this was the reiterated requests by Christopher's government on Saturday and Sunday to participate in the search for survivers in Cuban waters.

Answering a question, Alarcon referred to Washington's obvious hurry to force a declaration condemning Cuba.

It is possible that, as part of the anti-Cuban strategy, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright, president of the Security Council, will try to obtain such an approval before ending her term as head of the council on Thursday.

He also added that in view of the hardline positions of the Republican Party and bearing in mind the electoral period, Clinton will also try to present a hardline image, exaggerate the problem, and create a big international crisis for purely demagogic reasons.

Referring to sanctions announced by the U.S. President today, he said they also seek to give more resources to the group of the so-called Cuban-American National Foundation, pleasing it by preventing the trips of relatives to Cuba and economically strengthening the radio and television stations that campaign against the island.

Alarcon also said that proof of the U.S. hypocrisy is the fact that, since August, it has announced the prosecution of members of the group called Brothers to the Rescue for its violations of U.S. law due to its illegal flights over Cuba.

It even officially asked us for data on those violations to back the judicial process and thanked us for supplying this information, but it never reported the results of the judicial action and did not withdraw the license to continue undertaking those provocations, he stressed.

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Cuba: 'Brothers to the Rescue' Pilot Interviewed

PA2702030296 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cubavision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 27 Feb 96

["Exclusive" interview with Juan Pablo Roque, pilot of Brothers to the Rescue, by reporter Fabiola Lopez; place and date not given; from the "NTV" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Lopez] In the last few hours, the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Cuba reported the violation of the island's airspace by two pirate planes, which were downed by the Cuban Air Force. Today, I have an interview with pilot Juan Pablo Roque, a member of counterrevolutionary organization Brothers to the Rescue, precisely the organization to which the pilots who were downed on 24 February belonged.

To begin our conversation, I would like you to explain to me, when was Brothers to the Rescue created and who created it?

[Roque] Brothers to the Rescue was created in the year 1991 in the offices of the Cuban-American National Foundation. Specifically, Martin Perez, with substantial economic support from the foundation, advanced the idea with some former CIA agents, Jose Basulto, (Billy Shultz), Arnaldo Iglesias. They advanced the idea to create an allegedly quote, humanitarian organization, unquote, which would save the lives of the men who took to the sea to try to reach the coasts of Florida.

[Lopez] The figure of Jose Basulto is always tied to counterrevolutionary organization Brothers to the Rescue. Who is this gentleman?

[Roque] Jose Basulto is the president of organization Brothers to the Rescue. He is a man who actively participated with the CIA in the infiltration teams from the United States to Cuban territory in the early 1960's. He is involved in a series of terrorist actions in national territory and other areas of Central America.

[Lopez] Some people in the United States have questioned the humanitarian nature of organization Brothers to the Rescue, because they said they paid this organization with anticipation to rescue the relatives who left Cuba illegally. Is this true?

[Roque] Yes, that is correct. Brothers to the Rescue, among one of its functions... [pauses] I know of specific cases where they received between $2,000 and $4,000 for locating in the Strait of Florida relatives who left the country and tip the U.S. Coast Guard about it.

[Lopez] Juan Pablo, on several occasions, Jose Basulto has told the U.S. press that the means he is using to overthrow the Cuban revolution are absolutely peaceful means. Is this true?

[Roque] Peaceful means? That is the main idea and message Jose Basulto wanted to send to the world about organization Brothers to the Rescue. The soul of that organization is a counterrevolutionary organization. Among the counterrevolutionary activities that the organization has carried out, I can name many: For instance, in the year 1993 Jose Basulto asked information from me on specific stretches of road in the city of Cienfuegos where they can land and unload explosives to be placed in power pylons, which would be blown up. This would be done to affect the national energy system.

Approximately in November of 1994, April 1995, Basulto trained me on antipersonnel weapons, bird shot, which would be introduced in the country to carry out personnel attacks, especially against the life of the commander in chief. Their distribution and storage would be done through FAR [Revolutionary Armed Forces] and Minint [Ministry of the Interior] officials.

There is also a plan called Encounter 95, where Basulto wanted to increase ties between counterrevolutionary groups in Miami with persons who may help carry out internal terrorists plans in Cuba.

[Lopez] In addition to this, do you have knowledge of other terrorist, subversive missions?

[Roque] I can tell you that Basulto personally negotiated the purchase of a Czech-made L-29 [word indistinct] model to train pilots to land and take off from different landing strips and stretches of roads. The final objective of this jet plane was to try to stage direct attacks on Cuban military installations and bases and, in this way, to promote a terrorist plan for the objective of a national uprising. The intention was also to monitor the FAR and Minint frequencies for the objective of interfering and creating false signals in the national defense system.

[Lopez] From where did the funds for all these terrorist activities come?

[Roque] The funds for these activities essentially come from the Cuba-American National Foundation and Cuban-American businessmen such as Bacardi and others who contribute substantial amounts for the funds.

[Lopez] It is known that Brothers to the Rescue has violated the island's airspace despite the warnings of the Cuban Government. What is the reason for Basulto's insistence in undertaking these actions, knowing the risk that these entail for the lives of the pilots?

[Roque] I can say that the basic reason is to provoke incidents that will make relations between Cuba and the United States tense. That is what the extreme right wing wants in the United States.

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[Lopez] Is the U.S. Government aware of the activities of Brothers to the Rescue in Cuba?

[Roque] Yes, it is. I personally informed FBI agent Oscar Montoto, under the alias of (Slim Man), of all the operations that Brothers to the Rescue carried out, violating Cuban airspace. His beeper number is 7345578. Special FBI agent Oscar Montoto is in charge of all the violations of neutrality by the counterrevolutionary groups in Dade county.

[Lopez] When Jose Basulto violated Cuban airspace on 13 July 1995 and the Cuban Government presented to the U.S. Government proof of this action, the U.S. Government announced it would investigate the incident and would take measures. Do you have knowledge of any of the measures taken by the U.S. Government?

[Roque] The measures were taken very lukewarmly, practically no attention was paid to them. A report was made on the possible significance of those continuous violations and there was evaluation of the possibility of suspending the license of members of Brothers to the Rescue involved in this. This does not have any effect because in a two-seater plane, if one pilot is penalized, the other might not be, so the pilots will continue to fly.

[Lopez] The U.S. Government has not admitted that Brothers to the Rescue has violated Cuban airspace. What can you say about this?

[Roque] Brothers to the Rescue has violated Cuban airspace on several occasions. Pilots Jose Basulto, Guillermo Lares, and (Billy Shultz) have entered Cuban territory on more than one occasion, violating all established regulations.

[Lopez] You have also participated in this?

[Roque] I have also personally participated in the violation of airspace, specifically the last ones on 9 January 1996. I was called the day before to participate in a flight to Havana, during which thousands of leaflets were going to be dropped from more than 9,500 feet, at a distance of less than 10 miles from the coast, in other words very close. This mission was to be conducted in planes N2506 and N108LS. Airplane Captain (Billy Schultz) was going along with me. Once the altitude of 9,500 feet was reached, the windows were opened, at a nearly 45 degree angle, and the leaflets began to be dropped over Cuban territory. This violation was repeated on 13 January and thousands of leaflets were dropped. The intention was to try to raise the spirits of the counterrevolutionary organizations.

[Video shows Miami Channel 23 reporter stating: "We flew on plane No. 2506 with Jose Basulto and Roque. Opposite the sea wall, the four airplanes of Brothers to the Rescue flying in perfect formation became even more visible. A short while later, Cuba's reply: A MiG23. The MiG flew around us for about five minutes."]

[Lopez] Does Brothers to the Rescue violate other international and U.S. civil aeronautics regulations?

[Roque] It constantly violates civil aeronautics regulations. I can cite some of them. Brothers to the Rescue drops smoke bombs of different types, day, night, from the airplane windows. Sometimes these hit the back propellers of the airplanes or structural parts of the plane, such as windows and doors. There are very low flights, less than 50 feet, dropping food, et cetera. There are false reports on location during the flight. At some point, they try to deceive the air controllers. Flight plans are altered. Flights are planned to a specific point and they are diverted to national Cuban territory. That is the most frequent thing. In other words, a flight is planned to the Bahamas, on a specific route, but the flight is completely changed, deceiving the (?control tower) in Boyeros.

[Lopez] Why is Juan Pablo Roque is Cuba?

[Roque] I am in Cuba today because I want to make known to international public opinion the real nature of the organization of pilots, Brothers to the Rescue.

[Lopez] Thank you very much Juan Pablo for granting this interview to Cuban television.

Cuba: 'Brothers to the Rescue' Denounced by Member Pilot

PA2702015796 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 0119 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 26 Feb (PL) — In Havana today, a Cuban pilot and member of the group "Brothers to the Rescue," based in Miami, reported on the organization's activities in violation of the island's sovereignty, as well as its ties with U.S. special services.

During an interview to a local television station, Juan Pablo Roque said that he traveled to Cuba to denounce to the world the true illegal and anti—Cuban nature of Brothers to the Rescue.

Cuba: U.S. Increases 'Pressures' on UN Security Council

PA2702052896 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 0215 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 26 Feb (PL) — The United States has drastically increased its pressures on the UN Security Council to try to obtain this evening the adoption of a document condemning Cuba for the downing of pirate planes.

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After intense closed door meetings and after hearing President William Clinton's statement, the U.S. delegation in the Council, taking advantage of the fact that it holds the Security Council presidency this month, is lobbying strongly to fracture the position of some member countries that want to wait for the arrival of Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina.

According to diplomatic sources, Washington does not in any way want the presence of the Cuban minister without first obtaining the approval of the document. In addition, it changed all its strategy and, rather than a declaration from the presidency, it is now advocating a draft resolution, containing the same contents but in language characteristic of a resolution.

These same sources believe that the change in strategy is due to the fact that a draft declaration of the president of the Council must be adopted by consensus, which seemed difficult in view of the previously mentioned position of some countries.

A draft resolution, however, would be taken to a vote, and the United States hopes to have the nine necessary votes to approve it, as long as none of the five permanent members (the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, and China) vote against it, in other words, use the veto power granted by the UN charter.

Experts believe that this intense campaign against Cuba in the United Nations to obtain the condemnation of Cuba for the downing of two planes that violated Cuban airspace is being undertaken precisely to prevent the Cuban foreign minister from presenting his arguments and proof in the Council and, in this way, to maintain the U.S. hegemonic position on this case.

If the resolution were to be adopted, it would clearly show the often denounced lack of openness in the work of that forum. In addition, a member state of the organization would be deprived of presenting its position, an incredible but lately frequent occurrence in view of Washington's control of the organization's work and its desire to dictate its policies to the rest of the world.

The Council will meet again for informal consultations behind closed doors at 2300 (0400 GMT).

Cuba: U.S. Reaction to Incident 'New Focus of Tension'

PA2702053396 Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish 0226 GMT 27 Feb 96

[By Julio A. Machin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 26 Feb (PL) — The U.S. reaction following the downing of two U.S.-registered planes accused of violating Cuban airspace last Saturday, 24 February, has created a new focus of tension in the relations between Havana and Washington.

The incident is now being used by those, who from U.S. territory are trying to toughen the blockade, which for more than three decades has been applied by successive U.S. administrations. On this occasion they are also trying to turn this into an electoral gain.

According to local specialists, important U.S. individuals have been promoting for the last few months changes in the U.S. administration's policy toward Cuba.

Among the groups that have stated their intentions in this regard are: Democratic Party congressmen, businessmen, former high-ranking military officers, labor union leaders, and foreign policy experts, many of whom have traveled to Havana in the last few months to learn of the reforms introduced in Cuba's economy.

This rapprochement effort, according to analysts, has taken away political maneuvering room from the counterrevolutionary organizations based in Miami, Florida. This maneuvering room had been expanded in the last 12 years of Republican administration in the White House.

A normalization of the bilateral relations is contrary to the strategy of the right wing groups of the United States to produce the economic collapse of the Cubans and alienate the population against the local government at the same time, they said.

Brothers to the Rescue, a group also based in Miami and allegedly aimed at providing assistance to Cubans, who illegally migrate to the United States, has penetrated the island's airspace in repeated occasions despite the warnings made by the authorities in Havana and even, in some cases, by the United States itself.

According to experts, these flights over the capital and other parts of the national territory were aimed at encouraging its residents to "rebel themselves against the regime," which along with the violation of its territorial waters, is also a violation of international law, they said.

Other sources that were consulted do not rule out that Brothers to the Rescue were precisely seeking these types of incidents in order to push the U.S. administration into toughening the policy against Cuba.

President William Clinton decided today to increase the restrictions on trips by officials between the two countries, suspend commercial flights, and "seek an agreement" in Congress regarding the Helms-Burton

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Law with the purpose of toughening the blockade on the island.

The possible resolution of the events will have much to do with the seriousness and the sense of responsibility with which the United States acts.

The masterminds of the Cuban airspace violation claim the planes were downed over international waters, but Havana stated in official notes that he had objects from the downed planes picked up from its territorial waters and other irrefutable evidence that Brothers to the Rescue was very far from conducting humanitarian actions.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher described the events yesterday, as "extreme under any circumstance."

Cuba has noted that it has always acted with prudence and firmness in view of the countless plans it has had to face in more than three and a half decades and in official statements it insisted that it will always be responsible for its actions.

In another note released early this morning, Cuba said Christopher "lies barefacedly and in a language similar to the language we have been listening to for the past 36 years..."

That accusation was ratified hours later by the best Cuban expert on U.S. matters, Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government, in a news conference that included the presence of the leading television media of the neighboring country.

Cuba: UN Security Council Plans, Clinton Measures

PA2702063396 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 0400 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Interview with Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina by unidentified reporters from the airport in Mexico City; from the "24 Hours" newscast; broadcast in progress — live relay]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Robaina]...and especially in the coastal areas north of Havana.

At any rate, I will be able to explain, and I will be able to ratify the Cuban position in view of the statements made by U.S. Government representatives, which we do not share. As we have said in our statements, they have adopted a threatening position, which will never be accepted by the Cuban authorities and people. What is described as an unjustifiable action is for us the total and legitimate right to defend our sovereignty and our independence.

I simply want to ask the world — I would like to know — what country in the world that respects itself would be willing to allow the violations that have been repeatedly committed against our territory?

[Reporter] What evidence does Cuba have that the violations were committed over its territory?

[Robaina] Absolutely all the evidence, and we have said this. That is why we are going to the United Nations now. It would be childish and silly for us to be going to the United Nations and to refuse to meet the press if we did not have all the information in our hands, from taped conversations, to a minute-by-minute followup of this entire process. There is a long history, much sadder and more shameful, of over 20 months of patient warnings about such actions. I believe that, in sum, we have acted honestly. We have enough evidence to counter what some are saying, that the country has wanted to give a demonstration of strength.

For a long time, my country has been teaching a giant lesson of patience. I would like to know if some plane, if a civilian plane as they are claiming, does that over U.S. territory, how would the U.S. Government react? I believe the evidence is in our power, and the evidence has begun to speak. The television cameras must have already shown several of the objects in our power that were not picked up in international waters. They were collected from our own waters.

You would have to be extremely barefaced to be claiming that the incident took place in international waters.

They apparently forgot that on that same Saturday when they called the Cuban authorities to ask for permission to enter our territorial waters. It was permission that was granted; therefore, there is a great incoherence among the things that are being stated.

If that were not enough, the world must know about the statements of one who, up until a few hours ago, was part of that group and, far from being involved in humanitarian actions and in the rescue of brothers, was linked to mafia activities, illegal trafficking of immigrants, and activities that violate many more laws than those of international aviation.

I believe we have to discuss the problem in greater depth and not by going back to the place where they claim the incidents took place.

[Reporter] What is your opinion of the actions announced by Clinton today?

[Robaina] Regarding the actions the U.S. Government is proposing at the unilateral and multilateral level, I think

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we also have to respond. I do not want to get ahead of any particular action because, first of all, one has to see of what the actions consist. The United States, as our own statement says, has every right to take any measures at the unilateral level. Let no one nor the United States doubt that our country has every right to respond to those unilateral measures.

Regarding the Security Council, I am going there because I hope the Security Council will provide security to the world if it hears both versions and not only if it assimilates and magnifies one version, which has a number of contradictions that are very obvious to the world.

Therefore, I do not want to respond in a threatening tone to what has been done in threatening statements. I simply want to respond that my country has gotten used to living in 35 years without making threats. It is precisely because we are not afraid that we exist today, and we are going to continue living without fear.

Cuba: U.S. Attempts To Weaken Cuba 'From Within'

PA2502181396 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 1300 GMT 25 Feb 96

[From the "Morning Information Review" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The defeat of the Cuban political system is among the U.S. Government's priorities. So stated Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government [ANPP], here in Havana. Alarcon gave the main address at the ceremony marking the 101st anniversary of the beginning of the Independence War, the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Revolutionary Directorate, and the 20th anniversary of the Socialist Constitution. The ANPP president pointed out that the United States attempts to break unity, create confusion, and weaken Cuba from within along with the enormous pressure resulting from the hardened blockade and its permanently aggressive policy, which have been characteristic of U.S. behavior since 1959. The so-called Track Two of the Torricelli Law, he underscored, is another attempt to undermine the basis of the Cuban system. It is hypocrisy elevated to the rank of politics, he concluded.

Cuba: Debt to Venezuela Paid With Generic Medicine

PA2502185396 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 1300 GMT 25 Feb 96

[From the "Morning Information Review" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Venezuelan Foreign Affairs Minister Miguel Angel Burelli has confirmed in Caracas that his government has agreed to Cuba paying its debt with generic medicine. Burelli pointed out that Cuba has large laboratories that produce generic medicine. It will be very convenient, he said, for Cuba to make payments entirely or partially in this kind. The Venezuelan foreign affairs minister is expected to soon visit Havana officially. He added that he had already discussed the aforementioned subject with his Cuban counterpart Roberto Robaina when Robaina visited Caracas last November. In addition, Burelli underscored that medicine is so costly in Venezuela that the poor cannot afford to get sick. For this reason, he said, the acquisition of medicine from Cuba for the most needy is a priority for Venezuelan President Rafael Caldera.

Cuba: Roundup of Sugarcane Developments Through 25 Feb

PA2602135696

[FBIS Report] The following is a compilation of reports on sugarcane and sugar industry developments in Cuba monitored through 25 February.

A total of 150 Cuban youths went to the Candido Gonzalez Agro-industrial Complex in Matanzas to give quick response to Castro's words that there's need to take care of present and future sugarcane harvests. They will be divided intro three brigades in charge of weeding, planting, and cultivating the crops. Approximately 3,000 workers, who are divided into 79 groups are working in Pinar del Rio. (Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 16 Feb 96)

More than 30,000 metric tons of sugarcane were reported as a loss upon halting grinding at the northern agro-industrial complexes in Las Tunas due to heavy rains. (Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 19 Feb 96)

The sugarcane harvest in Guantanamo reportedly was lagging due to heavy rains. Costa Rica Agro-industrial Complex showed the lowest productivity. Conditions are being promoted to solve the situation. (Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 19 Feb 96)

Villa Clara was the best province in sugarcane harvest. Efficiency was reported at 12.04 percent, production, so far, has surpassed forecasts by 17 percent at 98 percent of estimated costs. (Havana Tele Rebelde and Cubavision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 23 Feb 96)

The Sugar Industry Ministry said that the country has registered 85.32 percent of recoverable product in sugarcane harvest. This is best results in 10 years. However, only 170 caballerias are planted per day

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instead of 293 caballerias. (Havana Cubavision Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Feb 96)

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Mexico: Nation Expresses Concern Over Cuban Incident

PA2702053696 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 0338 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mexico City, 26 Feb (NOTIMEX) — The Mexican Government today expressed concern over the tension generated between United States and Cuba over the downing of two U.S.-registered light airplanes by Cuban fighter-bombers on Saturday.

In a communique the Mexican Foreign Relations Secretariat urged both nations to resolve the situation by way of dialogue and negotiation, "strictly adhering to international law."

Upon underscoring the close relations Mexico maintains with both nations, the Foreign Secretariat added that Mexico trusts that a climate favorable to continued peace and regional stability will be restored.

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Costa Rica

Costa Rica: Figueres on Meeting With Christopher

PA2702060696 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0207 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] San Salvador, 26 February (ACAN-EFE) — Costa Rican President Jose Maria Figueres today highlighted in San Salvador the accomplishments of Central America following the meeting held between the presidents and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher regarding mainly security and trade.

Figueres told the press that there is a chance to establish in the region, with U.S. support, police training and professionalization centers, necessary for mainly fighting drug trafficking.

He considered that with the recent appointment of General Barry McCaffrey, chief of the Panama-based U.S. Southern Command, as maximum leader of the antidrug policy, "we will be able to better coordinate our efforts."

Figueres affirmed that McCaffrey "knows the region well, knows our capacities and our limitations, and I believe that we can get things done in this direction."

He reported that at the meeting with Christopher, the problem of car theft in the region was discussed, because "there is a lot of trafficking of stolen vehicles."

He added that Costa Rica has just made the last amendments to a bilateral cooperation treaty with the United States to face that problem, adding he hopes this treaty can be signed shortly.

Figueres said that Central America hopes that the United States strengthens the Peace Corps Program, so that more volunteers come to the region to work at the communities.

Regarding commercial relations between the region and the United States, the president of Costa Rica voiced his confidence that a treatment similar to Mexico's in the framework of NAFTA will be achieved.

"Concerning the issue of parity, we must not say it will not come quick, but we must not say either that it will come soon; it all depends on President Clinton's political will to submit this together with the Budget bill next March and that is now," Figueres expressed.

He explained that the United States "has" now "found the funds" to eliminate taxes and tariffs from the products Central American nations exports to that country, "as opposed to other occasions in which the parity concept has been proposed."

Figueres remarked that in the past, there was a problem in the United States as to how to replace the funds from the entry of Central American products without taxes, which total between $2.5 and $3 billion yearly for the entire Caribbean Basin region.

Figueres insisted that a quick or slow approval in the U.S. Congress of that concession to Central American countries will depend on the policy that will prevail in Congress, but the presidents can take individual or collective steps to expedite such approval.

"We must remember that the Republicans were the creators of the Caribbean Basin initiative and they have promoted free trade agreements. The Democratic administration is proposing the concept of parity and that is what both parties must support. They should favor a legal amendment such as this one, giving many more development alternatives to the region," Figueres concluded.

El Salvador

El Salvador: Assembly Head Notes 'Solidarity' With U.S.

PA2602202396 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1812 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] San Salvador, 26 Feb (ACAN-EFE) — Legislative Assembly President Gloria Salguero Gross today conveyed to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher "our solidarity" with his country over the downing of two U.S. light airplanes that took place on Saturday in Cuba.

At the end of a speech delivered at the Assembly building, which Christopher visited this week, Salguero said "we express El Salvador's solidarity with the United States over the tragic incidents that took place on 24 February in which two airplanes were downed."

Christopher reiterated to President Armando Salvador Sol, with whom he held a private meeting, the support of the United States to the peace and reconstruction process of his country following the signing of the peace accords between the previous government and the former guerrillas.

El Salvador: Politicans React to Honduran Troop Movement

PA2502084396 San Salvador LA PRENSA GRAFICA in Spanish 20 Feb 96 p 3A

[Report by Bernardo Valiente and Carlos Henriquez]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Foreign Relations Committee of the Legislative Assembly yesterday reminded the residents of the former border pockets that they are not alone, and, in light of the military reinforcement Honduras announced for these places, it said that there are

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institutions willing to defend them from any violation of their human rights.

The deputies agreed that El Salvador must not get involved in the militarist rhetoric that is heard on the other side of the border and that it is better to seek diplomatic solutions.

Roberto Arita, Honduran deputy foreign affairs minister, reported over the weekend that his country will boost its military presence along the border with El Salvador to prevent the Salvadorans living near the area from destroying the forests.

However, Honduran Foreign Minister Delmer Urbizo Panting yesterday denied this assertion, affirming that, in Tuxtla Gutierrez II, Honduras and El Salvador agreed to take measures to prevent the possibility of border confrontations. He insisted that he is unaware of Honduran troop movements at the border with El Salvador.

LA PRENSA GRAFICA yesterday was able to confirm that there are no Honduran troops in the hamlets of Nahuaterique and El Zancudo, which used to belong to Morazan Department, aside from the 26 soldiers who are there on a regular basis. Likewise, the residents maintained that the report on incursions by former armed FMLN [Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front] fighters to steal hardwood [maderas preciosas] and sell it in El Salvador is not true.

Eleuterio Gomez, secretary of the Commission of Representatives of the Areas Adversely Affected by The Hague Ruling, explained that, on 16 February, they met with Honduran authorities in the town of Marcala, where they rejected the plan to make Nahuaterique a municipality. He pointed out that Honduran Justice Minister Efrain Moncada's response was that "granting autonomy to the communities of Nahuaterique violates the Constitution." Another meeting was slated for the third week of March.

Politicians React

Salvadoran politicians said that Urbizo's statements, albeit contradictory, are encouraging. However, they criticized Honduras' position on this process, asserting that it is playing with fire and that it is "mounting a show" to justify any armed action.

Rene Figueroa, Foreign Relations Committee president and Arena [Nationalist Republican Alliance] deputy, pointed out that "we hope that the intention is to preserve the ecology and not to intimidate the fellow nationals who live in these areas."

In the opinion of Tomas Mejia, from the PDC [Christian Democratic Party], we must not be naive, because a military presence of the size Honduras has deployed to protect the forest cannot be justified.

Blocs as that of the Democratic Party described the situation as worrisome, alleging that Honduras is trying to justify in advance armed problems in the border region. If these problems erupt, we do not rule out that it is a "rehearsed show," Deputy Fidel Dolores Recinos underscored.

In the opinion of FMLN bloc chief Orlando Quinteros, this situation stems from the fact that the military refuses to give up in Honduras and is trying to create artificial needs to keep a military structure in such poor economies as those of the Central American countries.

Honduras

Honduras: Reina on Cuban Plane Downing, Christopher

PA2702054996 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0123 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tegucigalpa, 26 Feb (ACAN-EFE) — Honduran President Carlos Roberto Reina said today the downing of two civilian light planes by Cuban jet fighters "is an unfortunate incident," adding he hopes the conflict between the United States and Cuba will be resolved by the United Nations.

Reina returned today from El Salvador, where he traveled this morning to attend with other Central American presidents a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Among other topics, they discussed trade issues and the situation of thousands of Central Americans who live in the United States.

The Honduran president indicated the measures against Cuba that U.S. President Bill Clinton is requesting because of the incident will probably be criticized "by extremists" of that country or "candidates who raise radical flags such as Mr. Buchanan" (Patrick, extreme conservative Republican).

Reina said that President Clinton "has said the matter will be resolved through the United Nations," adding that in this sense, "we agree."

The meeting with Christopher was attended by Presidents Jose Maria Figueres (Costa Rica), Carlos Roberto Reina (Honduras), and Armando Calderon Sol, the Salvadoran host.

The presidents of Guatemala, Panama, and Nicaragua did not go to El Salvador because of prior commitments.

"We condemn all acts of violence, we regret what occurred, and we hope a solution to this conflict will

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be rapidly found through international law, which was created to achieve world peace," Reina stressed. The Honduran president said his position "will always be in favor of law and just causes."

Regarding the meeting with Christopher, he remarked that it was fruitful and that Central America expects a treatment similar to what Mexico receives under NAFTA.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua: Nation Condemns Cuba's Downing of Airplanes

PA2702010096 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0006 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Managua, 26 Feb (ACAN-EFE) — The Nicaraguan Government today condemned the downing of two small U.S. airplanes by Cuban "MiGs" on 24 February, and urged the sides involved to exercise "moderation" to avoid new incidents.

The Nicaraguan Foreign Relations Ministry, in a note published in Managua, described the downing of the small airplanes as "a deplorable act" that does not contribute to detente among states.

The Nicaraguan Government, "in the interest of preserving international peace, urges the sides involved to exercise moderation to avoid new incidents," the official note added.

In the same communique, the Nicaraguan Government expressed satisfaction "that this affair" has been transferred "for examination" to the UN Security Council.

U.S. President Bill Clinton today announced a series of political, economic, and diplomatic sanctions against Cuba in reprisal over the downing of the two small airplanes by Cuban fighter bombers.

Panama

Panama: Editorial Views Outcome of 'New Cuban Crisis'

PA2602155096 Panama City EL PANAMA AMERICA in Spanish 26 Feb 96 p 6A

[Editorial: "New Cuban Crisis"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Cuban Air Force's downing the day before yesterday of two light airplanes belonging to the Brothers to the Rescue group opens a new and dangerous chapter in the tense relations between the island and the United States.

The incident took place in the midst of the U.S. presidential campaign, something that must be taken into consideration in any analysis that may be made on the matter.

The facts are confusing. Cuba alleges having downed the light airplanes after warning the planes that they were within its airspace. Anti-Castroites, however, maintain the opposite. Whatever it is, the amazing thing is that this did not happen earlier. For the past three years, the organization of exiles has been patrolling the narrow Caribbean strait that separates the island from the Florida coast in search for rafters. On occasion, Cuba warned against the incursions within its sovereignty. As a matter of fact, several light airplanes of unknown origin have released flyers in Havana and swiftly escaped, taking advantage of the short distance that brings them to safety.

U.S. Radio Marti bombards the island daily with an innumerable number of messages, trying to soften the foundations of the dictatorship. It is the ideal climate for this sort of incident.

For keen analysts, however, it is not difficult to see that the airplanes' downing was carefully weighed. The fighter airplanes flew out to encounter them after being detected by the Cuban radar, and they were instructed to destroy them.

For a skillful dictator who has been in power over 37 years this was not a mistake, but a calculated risk, or, perhaps, a mistake that marks the end of his era.

It is possible that once again, as he did when he accepted the rafters' crisis and launched a migratory missile that forced the United States to capitulate, he may seek to play the crisis card to force his neighbors to grant him more concessions again.

On that occasion, he succeeded in getting the United States to cease encouraging illegal escapes from the island, replacing it with a substantial increase in the quota of Cuban immigrants and the removal on the ban to send foreign currency to the island, together with the softening of restrictions on tourist measures.

In addition, on several opportunities, Castro has expressed his open preference for Clinton. It is possible that he may have played such a dangerous card to help him with regard to the challenge by radical rightist candidate Pat Buchanan or any other Republican, which, according to him, would halt the progress made.

Such dance, at the edge of the abyss, may make him fall in the hands of the very person he seeks to favor. Clinton has the opportunity to boost his image at home with regard to the rightist sectors that want to solve the Castro problem once and for all. We would not be surprised if he ordered a fulminating reprisal.

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Argentina

Argentina: Menem Assesses Relations With Britain

MS2702114796 London INDEPENDENT in English 27 Feb 96 p 8

[Report on interview with Argentine President Carlos Menem by Safa Haeri in Buenos Aires on 27 February: "Chirac Urged Menem to Appease Old Enemy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Carlos Menem, the Argentinian president, has revealed that French leader Jacques Chirac was a prime mover in pushing him to normalise relations with Britain.

In an interview with The Independent before starting a visit to France today, Mr Menem said that, before he became president in 1989, he met Mr Chirac in Paris, where his opposite number was then mayor.

"He told me as... a longtime politician: "If you want to have good relations with the European countries, you have to normalise your relations with the United Kingdom as soon as you win the elections."

"This was a time that the EU was pushing towards its integration... Therefore, soon after I was elected, I sent our then foreign minister to London, urging him to do his best to normalise our relations. And in less than one year, our relations turned from really terrible to really good, which continues today."

Britain was among the major investors in his country, he said, and as further evidence of what he called "very good to excellent" relations, he noted that agreement had been reached on the exploration and production of oil in the South Atlantic while, talks continued for other accords on fisheries.

Asked if the state of "agreeing to disagree" over the Falkland Islands will continue and what, in his view, Britain could do to improve relations, Mr Menem replied with a laugh: "As I said, the relations are already excellent, but they can become even better if they would return the islands to us."

Argentina: Menem on French Murder Case, Role of Military

BR2602155096 Paris LE FIGARO in French 24 Feb 96 p 4

[Interview by Charles Lambroschini with Argentine President Carlos Menem in Buenos Aires; date not given: "Argentina Is Going Full Out for Modernization"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Lambroschini] For years now the Astiz affair has been poisoning relations between Paris and Buenos Aires. This navy officer, whom France condemned to lifelong imprisonment for murdering two French nuns during the military dictatorship, has just been transferred to reserve duty. Is this the final stage before his retirement?

[Menem] The process is under way. These things do not get done from one day to the next. There are 500 or 600 letters of resignation from military personnel, and among these, that of Captain Astiz. You have to understand that this officer is protected by legislation, the so called "full stop" law, which predates my election. My government has nothing to do with this.

[Lambroschini] Have you, as it is being said, made a political agreement with Admiral Molina Pico, the naval chief of staff. Under the terms of this compromise, Astiz' retirement will be granted only after your return from France? In this way the Armed Forces will save face vis-a-vis Paris.

[Menem] I do not make compromises with my subordinates. I decide and they obey. I am the commander of the Armed Forces. At the executive level there is no discussion. The only discussion is in parliament.

[Lambroschini] You talk of 500 letters requesting retirement. One could have reason to believe that, before leaving for France, you would have examined the Astiz file to see whether he had indeed sent in his request.

[Menem] The only thing that I can tell you is that the process is under way. With or without letters, this is a process which has to go ahead as provided for in the regulations. With all the wars that France has been through, has it not known similar situations?

[Lambroschini] Yes, but before pardoning, France punished its disloyal officers.

[Menem] Of course, there can be no pardon without prior judgment. When I came to power, Captain Astiz was neither punished not condemned. The previous government, that of President Alfonsin, had already judged him and he had taken advantage of the legislation which allowed the past to be buried. How then could I pardon Captain Astiz? And how could I punish him? No accused person can be judged twice for the same deeds?

[Lambroschini] The silence about the crimes of the Argentine military has never been officially lifted, because the various amnesty laws have drawn a line. And there remains the terrible memory of those 30,000 missing persons, a list of whom has never been drawn up. How will Argentina be able to prosper if it does not assume this past?

[Menem] What silence are you talking about? The military have been judged and condemned. Under

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my government the Armed Forces have undergone fundamental changes. Obligatory military service has been abolished, while in France you are only beginning to talk about this. Do not talk to me about the past! Argentina has transformed itself and today it lives in peace. The Army, in Argentina as in France, is a fundamental institution. I would go as far as to add that Argentina was born with its Armed Forces: Independence was gained by priests and the military. [passage omitted]

Brazil

Brazil: Ministry Expresses 'Regret' on Cuban Action

PY2702000996 Brasilia Voz do Brasil Network in Portuguese 2200 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Brazilian Government expressed regret at the incident that took place on 24 February, when Cuban fighter planes downed two U.S. civilian airplanes that allegedly invaded Cuban air space. The Brazilian position is described in a message released today by the Foreign Ministry. According to the message, incidents of this kind can create an atmosphere of instability in the Caribbean region.

[AGENCIA ESTADO in Portuguese at 2052 GMT on 26 February notes that the Brazilian Foreign Ministry message reads: "With sorrow and concern, the Brazilian Government has learned of the episode that ended in the downing of two U.S. civilian airplanes along the Cuban coast on 24 February, with the loss of human lives. The Brazilian Government is attentive to the investigations regarding the incident, which it trusts will be widely and satisfactorily clarified. The Brazilian Government expresses regret that episodes of this kind, besides causing loss of human lives, could create an atmosphere of confrontation and instability in the region."]

Brazil: Nation Said To Object to Christopher's Agenda

PY2702125296 Sao Paulo VEJA in Portuguese 28 Feb 96 p 23

[From the "Radar" column by Anselmo Gois: "Ghosts Revisited"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Itamaraty [Brazilian Foreign Ministry] may deny this, but the Brazilian administration did not like the inclusion of a meeting with Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns and a visit to the Amazon region on the agenda of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to Brazil, which begins on 1 March. The administration regards all this as a move stemming from an election year in the United States, where Brazil is better known for human rights violations and the burning of rain forests.

Brazil: Mexican 'Alliance' Proposal Said 'Harmful'

PY2602153996 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 22 Feb 96 p A3

[Editorial: "Strategic Alliance?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shortly before President Fernando Henrique Cardoso left for Mexico, the Mexican ambassador to Brasilia announced that Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo would propose a "strategic alliance" with Brazil. Itamaraty [Brazilian Foreign Ministry] was sounded out on the subject, and the answer — which was negative — was made public by the chief of the Itamaraty Department of the Americas. Once he was in Mexico, the "surprise" with which President Cardoso listened to the proposal was a simple diplomatic, compromising move. However, from the viewpoint of a presidential visit that was improperly prepared, one may believe that it was a genuine surprise. Planalto Palace and Itamaraty thoroughly announced that the president would not go to Mexico to address trade and economic issues, but politics, particularly the importance of democracy in the life of nations. For this reason, the entourage included only the foreign minister — whose presence was mandatory — and the minister of culture, because, as it was learned later, the president believes that the political will to promote closer relations needs the support of cultural ties.

Whatever the interpretation, the facts of the matter are that even though professor Fernando Henrique Cardoso's agenda always has room for visits, his visits seldom have a previously arranged agenda. His team left too many points for discussion or for inclusion in statements or protocols. Zedillo clearly exploited this vulnerability.

Since Mexico chose NAFTA, Brazilian diplomacy has rephrased the largest regional integration effort, calling it South American, instead of Latin American. The political meaning of the change is clear: Mexico was no longer among Brazilian priorities, it joined another sphere, and it would be treated accordingly. From a conceptual viewpoint, Mexico was excluded from the South American free-trade area.

The subservience imposed by the adaptation to NAFTA, and the exchange rate crisis have both led Mexico to a dramatic situation, in which it must try to obtain benefits wherever it can. Whoever is in desperate need will not care for the appropriateness of an action. President Zedillo ignored his guest's sincere desires to avoid speaking about business, and made his proposal with

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a merchant's mind. At the official dinner, President Cardoso praised bilateral opportunities, despite commitments to Mercosur [Common Market of the South] and NAFTA, and he replied to the proposal that Brazil cannot engage in any undertaking without its partners. Zedillo did not waste the chance, and wherever the word Brazil appeared in his proposal, it was changed to Mercosur. The Brazilian president ended up promising to take the proposal to Mercosur.

Zedillo scored a goal thanks to the Brazilian Government's lack of foresight. It is quite clear that the so-called "strategic alliance," the way it was proposed, does not benefit Brazil. The proposal conditions two topics that were not described, both of them harmful to Brazil and possibly to the other Mercosur partners. The first topic is that under the "alliance," Mexico might find a way to circumvent LAIA [Latin American Integration Association] obligations, which force Mexico to grant to the other countries of the continent the same preferences that it is giving to the United States and Canada. The second is that after the custom barriers and the restrictions on the area of services are both removed, the exchange rate difference between Mexico and Mercosur countries — especially Brazil and Argentina — can produce an avalanche of imported Mexican products. This is a benefit with which Mexico can balance the excessive dependence of its economy on U.S. market fluctuations.

Whether naive or malicious, President Cardoso's surprise did not give him a chance to do away with an inappropriate subject. On the contrary, now he is a middleman bringing the Mexican proposal to Mercosur. The president did not want to address economic and commercial matters with Mexico. Yet now he will deal with economic and commercial matters between Mexico and Mercosur.

Chile

Chile: Insulza Says Cuban Action 'Very Censurable'

PY2702024596 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2113 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Santiago, 26 Feb (EFE) — Chilean Foreign Minister Jose Miguel Insulza today categorically condemned the downing of two civilian planes in Cuba, an event he called "very censurable."

Insulza said: "The Chilean Government position is that of condemning the attack by fighter planes, without previous warning, on unarmed civilian planes, beyond the fact of whether they were or were not flying over territorial waters."

The attack on the two airplanes, carried out on Saturday, and its repercussions in the political arena could become an important issue for the agenda with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who will arrive in Santiago on Tuesday for a visit of less than 24 hours.

Moreover, speaking before the UN Security Council, of which Chile has been a nonpermanent member since 1 January 1996, the Chilean Government has reacted since last Sunday to the incident, condemning the attack on civilian aircraft.

The Chilean minister said that beyond the technical or legal aspects surrounding this incident, there is a human factor that is more important.

Insulza said: "We find unjustifiable under any circumtances the destruction of airplanes and the death of human beings (...) It is an incident that can be highly criticized and censured."

He added that the Chilean Foreign Ministry is waiting to learn more legal details about the incident, and only then will it be able to issue some type of a statement on the issue, because "the characteristics of the incident will be very different depending upon whether territorial or international waters are involved."

The foreign minister said he will receive the report from Cuban Ambassador to Santiago Aramis Fuentes, who defended his country's position, warning that the repeated violations of air space by planes flying from the United States have been "a terrorist mechanism."

Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador to Chile Gabriel Guerra Mondragon today met with Insulza to discuss details of Christopher's visit, and said that his government is "absolutely annoyed over this action by the Cuban Government."

Guerra Mondragon added that after the incident, surely the support of proposals submitted to the U.S. Congress to stiffen the economic embargo measures against Cuba will increase.

"This bill will have more supporters," the U.S. ambassador said.

Chile: Politicians React to Christopher Visit

PY2702010796 Santiago LA SEGUNDA in Spanish 23 Feb 96 pp 22-23

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will be arriving in Santiago on the afternoon of 27 February to conduct a series of officials meetings. Few details have been disclosed up to now about the issues he will discuss during his tight agenda. [passage on Christopher's schedule omitted]

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Warren Christopher's visit to Chile has raised some skepticism and ironies. This is because the majority of Chilean leaders would hope to include in Christopher's agenda precisely those same issues that U.S. Ambassador Gabriel Guerra-Mondragon has already announced will not be included on the agenda: the entrance of Chile into NAFTA and the poisoned grapes case. Politicians, businessmen, union and association leaders agree on making the same demands from the United States: less promises and words and more specific accomplishments.

[Sebastian] Pinera (RN) [National Renewal]: "Fulfill U.S. Promises"

RN Senator Sebastian Pinera said: "I hope that instead of making new promises, Secretary of State Warren Chirstopher will fulfill promises made by U.S. presidents."

He added that "for example, U.S. President Bush enthusiastically announced in 1990 the "Initiative for the Americas," but up to now it has not been able to have an effect south of the Rio Grande. Moreover, when Bush visited Chile in 1992, he promised to expedite Chile's entrance into NAFTA. Up to now, these have only been words. We want to see facts and action."

[Jorge] Pizarro (PDC) [Christian Democratic Party]: "He Must Expedite NAFTA"

Jorge Pizarro, PDC vice president and deputy, said that during this visit "it is a good idea to clarify the position on negotiations for joining NAFTA. We must clarify the situation because unrealistic expectations have been generated on this issue."

Regarding what should be the main issue that would motivate Christopher's trip to Chile, Pizarro said: "This policy of enhancing and assessing U.S.-Chilean projects is important."

[Alejandro] Foxley (PDC): "It Is Senseless for Him To Come Just To Say Niceties"

According to PDC President Alejandro Foxley, former finance minister during the Aylwin administration, "it would be senseless for him to come just to say niceties without making a formal commitment to push" the approval of the "fast track" [preceding two words in English] that will allow the signing of a free trade agreement between Chile and the United States.

Foxley said: "I would also like to see Warren Christopher's visit constitute a confirmation that the U.S. Government will move forward in the U.S. Congress with approval of the 'fast track' that will allow a free trade agreement with Chile."

[Senate President Gabriel] Valdes: "Let Him Come To See That We Are Not Indians"

Senate President Gabriel Valdes, who served as foreign minister during the administration of President Eduardo Frei Montalva [1964- 70] said: "I do not believe the secretary of state has ever been to Chile or Latin America, but because Chilean and U.S. efforts to strengthen friendship and trade ties have been useless, they have now sent him to Chile to offer some explanations, as a gesture of good will."

Making an ironic comment about Christopher's visit, Valdes said: "The objective of his visit should be to know Chile, to verify that we are not Indians and that we have good weather, and to learn about the real situation in Chile. His visit to Chile and Latin America is a matter of protocol because Christopher is constantly traveling throughout the world, but he has never been to Latin America before."

Maria Rozas (CUT) [United Labor Federation] [second vice president]: "He Should Reassert the Commitment of Including Labor Regulations in NAFTA"

Acting CUT President Maria Rozas, who is also PDC candidate for the CUT presidency, said: "He is coming to strengthen ties with Latin America and with Chile in particular because Chile's entrance into NAFTA is still tormenting Clinton."

She added: "He should come with a clear commitment" to achieve a formal trade agreement and, in addition, "to reassert the commitment that Clinton made during his presidential campaign to include labor regulations in commercial agreements."

[Exporters Association Chairman] Ronald Brown: "He Comes for More Negotiations"

Exporters Association Chairman Ronald Brown said: "He is coming because the United States has a debt with Chile. It has treated us badly. It made all sorts promises about NAFTA and has not fulfilled any of them."

Nevertheless, he believes that Christopher "is coming for more negotiations, to give explanations about something that all of us are aware will be impossible to achieve in the short term; namely, Chile's entrance into NAFTA. This will be impossible to realize because of U.S. domestic policy. There will not be a 'fast track,' even in 1997."

He also expresses the hope, "and I believe this is the way it will be, that the poisoned grapes issue will be addressed. This is the time for the Chilean administration to define this as a priority issue so as

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to resolve it this year because we know that nothing will happen with NAFTA."

[Carlos] Ominami (PS) [Socialist Party]: "He Is Coming To Give Explanations"

PS Senator Carlos Ominami believes that Christopher "is coming to give explanations in view of the nonfulfillment of U.S. political commitments made during the Miami Summit on free trade in the Americas, particularly, on how Chile was initiating this process."

Former Economy Minister Ominami expressed the hope that the objective of the U.S. secretary of state's visit is to report that the pending problems with Chile (such as the poisoned grapes case) are solved and that the Clinton administration is in a condition to approve the "fast track" so that Chile may be alowed to enter NAFTA. He acknowledges, however, that "this will not happen during this visit because of restrictions resulting from the current domestic situation in the United States."

[Senator Eugenio] Cantuarias (UDI) [Independent Democratic Union]: "I Hope He Does Not End Up Giving Us Instructions About [Colombian Cali cartel treasurer] Pallomari"

UDI Senator Eugenio Cantuarias, the next vice president of the Senate, said that Christopher should, "first of all, be welcomed with the honors due a cabinet member. He is not an apostle or a God.... The fact that the U.S. ambassador has informed us about the issues Christopher will not address during his stay in Chile reminds me of the colonialism the United States is so inclined to profess."

He added: "Moreover, I fear that neither this issue [not further identified] nor the NAFTA issue will be discussed, and that we will end up discussing the case involving Pallomari, the Chilean who served as treasurer of the Cali cartel in Colombia, and he will probably instruct us on internal Chilean matters. I am not in favor of money laundering, but I dislike being told what to do."

Cristobal Valdes [Chilean Exporters Corporation] Chairman: Let There Be Progress on the NAFTA and Poisoned Grapes Issues

Cristobal Valdes, Chilean Exporters Corporation chairman, said that Christopher's visit is in response to the fact that Chile has upheld its economic commitments and supported U.S. free trade. [sentence as published]

He added: "I hope we can achieve progress not only regarding NAFTA, but also concerning the preferential system and effective cooperation at the regional level. Up to now this has only been an aspiration." He also said it would be "very important" to achieve progress on the poisoned grapes case.

[Vice Chairman] Victor Manuel Rebolledo [Party for Democracy] (PPD): He Has "a Pending Assignment"

Victor Manuel Rebolledo, PPD vice chairman and former government secretary general, said that the "fast track" and the poisoned grapes case are subjects which should be included on the secretary of state's agenda in Chile.

He agrees that Latin America does not seem to be a U.S. foreign policy priority and that what remains after the Miami Summit "is a pending assignment in U.S. foreign policy."

[Senator Sergio] Romero (RN): "We Must Know How Many Think Like Buchanan"

RN Senator Sergio Romero believes that "it is very important for him to give a more satisfactory answer about the political reasons that have impeded the realization of a free trade market in the region. The Americans are just starting to express their points of view. That is Pat Buchanan's case. People in Chile wonder how many people in the United States think like Buchanan."

Regarding the poisoned grapes case, he said: "The question is why a double standard is applied in the legal proceedings involving the poisoned grapes case as opposed to the Letelier case, in which the Bryan Commission did issue a ruling."

The Issues: Economic Integration and Regional Peace

President Eduardo Frei will grant his final approval to the definitive agenda that he will broach with Warren Christopher only on 26 February.

U.S. Ambassador Gabriel Guerra-Mondragon announced that the secretary of state will have an "open agenda" in his meetings with national officials and that the visit will center on the importance of the processes to help strengthen democracy and peace in the Americas.

However, some of the issues that will be raised have been leaked from the Chilean Foreign Ministry. They are:

— The fulfillment of the 1994 Miami Summit agreements, which called for moving forward in the establishment of a free trade area in the Americas.

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— The holding of negotiations for Chile to join NAFTA (on the basis of the existing debate regarding environmental and labor clauses that must be included).

— The work conducted by the United States and Chile in their capacity as guarantor countries on the Peruvian-Ecuadoran border and the assessment of international instruments and agreements for the fulfillment of peace (this is an issue that acquires additional relevance because Chile is the only Latin American country with a seat in the UN Security Council).

The Foreign Ministry has stated that it is very unlikely that officials will broach the "poisoned grapes case" because at present secret diplomatic negotiations are being conducted on the issue.

To Show the Relevance of Ties With Latin America

Moreover, the arrival of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher a few days prior to the arrival of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry to Santiago signifies that Washington wants to show the relevance it grants to its ties with Latin America. This is in view of the criticism that has been made against the Clinton administration regarding foreign relations and for the scarce attention it has granted to this part of the world.

Christopher's trip, which in addition to Chile also includes four other Latin American countries, and which constitutes the first state visit by a U.S. secretary of state to the region since George Schultz arrived in 1988, is intended to reverse this view and to promote the type of ties the United States wants to have with the Americas. These ties are to be centered on issues such as free trade, a joint struggle to combat drug trafficking and crime, the safeguarding of the environment, and the achievement of social justice. [passage on Warren Christopher's biographical data omitted]

Colombia

Colombia: Commentary on Reasons for Cuba's Use of Force

PA2602141596 Santa Fe de Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 26 Feb 96

[Commentary by Antonio Panesso from the "Caracol's 0600 to 0900" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] To down a military airplane constitutes an act of war. To down a civilian airplane is an international crime. This is what just what happened a few days ago with the truly excessive reaction by Cuba, which attacked airplanes that — according to Cuba — were violating its airspace. This is, however, an action that has a explanation that comes from way back because of the acts of provocations that Cubans in Miami have been carrying out against Cuba for a long time. The reaction was excessive, but the reason for it is that Cubans are proving to be intractable, both in Cuba and in Miami. It is a problem for the United States that its new citizens are constantly making trouble with an adversary that does not yield.

Colombia: Samper Feels 'Lynched' by Media Sources

PA2402033796 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1653 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bogota, 21 Feb (EFE) — Colombian President Ernesto Samper has said that he feels he has been "lynched" by several media sources during the ongoing crisis, which was triggered by the charges that his electoral campaign was financed with money coming from drug trafficking activities.

"I confess that at times I have practically felt lynched by several media sources," Samper stated at the 50th anniversary of the Bogota Press Club on Tuesday night. The Bogota Press Club presented its yearly awards during this event.

"The only gripe I have to make to several amiable journalists is that they have never heard my version," Samper added. The president has been criminally charged of illegal enrichment, concealment, electoral fraud, and misrepresentation before the Congress of the Republic.

The president, who is a liberal and was elected in 1994, underscored that those journalists "got married to one version of the problem and there they have remained, accepting it as a dogma that produced truths or lies that became truths based solely on the fact that they clung to this single explanation of the facts."

Regarding the process against him, the president reiterated that he backs "all efforts made to get the case to be processed open to the people, without hiding anything or evading any point. We are all interested in knowing the truth and not half truths, incomplete truths, or pieces of truths."

Samper also insisted that "no one can say he has been persecuted in the hectic search for news" or "can state that the government has tried to stop an information or "negotiate" a "scoop."

However, he maintains his convictions that institutions, such as freedom of the press, must be defended and that he has "continued to govern without diverting from my administrative responsibil[illegible] for one single minute."

He also emphasized that "although it seems impossible, I have done all this without losing my sense of humor." He said this reminded him of a Charles Chaplin's tip that "a day without laughter is a day you have lost in your life."

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Samper criticized "the elevation of rumor to news" and the "legal excesses committed by leaking part of legal case files" and stated that he believes "that no president has ever had his or his family's honor so mistreated as I have had during the development of this crisis."

The Colombian president said that these legal case files "have been taken out of context of the actual cases" and "with this they not only create great confusion among readers, but can cause a great deal of harm to the basic principle that guarantees everyone being investigated to a right to defend themselves."

Samper also reminded the press that "investigative work cannot be replaced by simple 'transcription' work — transcribing documents without any analyses as to the truth of its contents."

"We could also speak of the right to correction — that the correction is inversely proportional of the importance of the news being corrected: the greater the libel, the smaller the correction," added Samper.

The Colombian president, alluding to his legal case, stated that "some naively believe that what is at stake is the fate of the president of the Republic."

"No, what is under trial is our institutions' resistance, beginning with the institution of freedom of the press," as well as "the actual democratic institutions," Samper underscored.

Colombia: Samper 'Would Have To Amend' Constitution

PA2602221396 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 1730 GMT 21 Feb 96

[From the "National Newscast"; monitored from retransmission by Lima Sistema Unido de Retransmision Television at 1830 GMT 21 Feb]

[FBIS Translated Text] To introduce the death penalty, President Ernesto Samper would have to amend the Constitution, which clearly forbids such punishment. This issue would take two periods in Congress.

Samper's announcement has already triggered reaction, especially among those who believe the death penalty goes against the de jure state, which, among other things, protects the lives of people, including those of criminals; therefore, those who oppose it have said they cannot go against that which is protected.

President Samper has said the death penalty would only be ruled to punish perpetrators of outrageous crimes. According to experts whom the "National Newscast" has questioned, the word outrageous is a social not legal term. Furthermore, there are international treaties Colombia has signed, for example, the Convention on Human Rights, prohibiting the reestablishment of the death penalty.

Overall changes to the Constitution would be needed in order to go back to the days of 1910, when the assassins of General Rafael Reyes were put before a firing squad.

Colombia: President Speaks on Freedom of Press

PA2602210696 Santa Fe de Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish 22 Feb 96

[Text of speech by President Ernesto Samper during the ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the Bogota Press Club in Santa Fe de Bogota on 20 February — received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] I am pleased for various reasons to attend the 50th anniversary of the CPB [Bogota Press Club]. The first reason is because since I was a child, I learned to love this club through my father, who was one of its founders, and through my brother Daniel. The second reason is because this commemoration affords us the opportunity to remember many newsmen who should have been here and whom we miss with the nostalgia of friends, some of them colleagues of yours. The last reason is because this function gives me the opportunity to express some brief comments on the news media's role in the current situation of the country.

I read this weekend that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was asked on one occasion to donate one of his photographs to the White House Press Room. Roosevelt sent it without delay with the dedication reading: "With all my love, from its victim." Tonight, the situation is very different from that one, very different because I did not bring a photograph tonight but, rather, came in person.

The comments I will most likely utter tonight are explicably influenced by my personal perception of all the aspects of the so- called political crisis. I admit to you that I have felt practically lynched by certain news media on some occasions. We have returned on several occasions to the old, harmful, political journalism of another era when news was not used to inform but, rather, to bring about a political effect, when everything — headlines, texts, photographs, images, but, most of all, silence — was placed at the service of a specific, political cause. I, honored that I come from a family of journalists, do not mean to give advice on the journalism profession. I do believe, however, I have the authority to softly utter some reflections about how the news media could contribute to a final solution to the crisis. I claim that authority for myself based on the government's behavior regarding the news media in these past months, which have been very trying for the president, as such, as a citizen and a person.

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Nobody can say he has been harassed while in a hardworking search for the news. Nobody can say the government has tried to stop a report or "negotiate" a "news item." I believe no other president in Colombia's recent history has had his honor and that of his family as battered as mine during the development of this crisis. I can assure you that despite that observation, I have succeeded in keeping my convictions intact regarding the defense of institutions such as freedom of the press. I have continued to govern without distracting a single minute from my administrative responsibilities, and, although you may find this hard to believe, I have not lost my sense of humor. I always remember Chaplin's advice that a day without laughter is a day lost in one's life.

Those circumstances do not prevent me from remembering some ethical norms that the CPB approved last year and that have been developed in an excellent book on ethics for journalists written by Maria Teresa Herran and Javier Dario Restrepo. I recommend that you read that book. I am concerned that the sacred barrier that must exist between the freedom of a commentary and the rigor of a news report is crumbling.

The news world must be totally separated from commentaries; otherwise, we could find that headlines are used to editorialize and opinions become reports. This position is established in the CPB Code's word of caution against propagandistic headlines. Another point is balanced reporting. A news report that does not include reaction could turn out to be as counterfeit as a one-sided coin. Many reports have been published in recent months without the affected individuals having been given the opportunity to reject, clarify, or simply expound their side of the story.

I confess that the only complaint I have regarding certain journalists and friends throughout this period is that they never listened to what I had to say. They have hitched themselves to one side of the story on the problem and remained there, accepting that side as a dogma that produced true stories but also lies that were turned into truths because of the decision to cling to only one depiction of the events. This leads to another simple thought regarding the handling of the sources of information.

Some journalists have forgotten they have the morphological ability to keep their throat narrow so they will not swallow information like a grindstone and to be able to analyze the sources before believing them. I could comment on some other thoughts taken from the book I mentioned. I will mention only a few.

Research cannot be substituted by transcribing documents without seriously analyzing their contents to determine their veracity. The abusive use of leaks of judicial notes that form part of a record and that are taken out of proceedings not only creates much confusion among readers but can also very much harm the fundamental principles guaranteeing the accused person's right to defense, such as the presumption of innocence and the free challenging of evidence.

We could also mention the right of rectification, noting that rectifications are inversely proportional to the magnitude of the report being rectified: The bigger the slander, the smaller the rectification.

We could also mention the upgrading of rumors to the level of news and the competition for audiences, which is a sophisticated expression to describe what Gabriel Garcia Marquez has called the sensational news syndrome. It is up to you, however, to begin thinking about media behavior during times of crisis.

Some naively believe that what is at stake is the fate of the president of the country. No. It is our institutions, beginning with freedom of the press, that is being checked.

Our legal state and its survival possibilities are being checked.

What is being checked is our capability to administer justice, to report objectively, to investigate without persecuting, to legislate without rush.

The democratic institutions are being checked.

I have offered the country an open trial. I have requested the lifting of the confidentiality of the proceedings and have urged Congress to approve this. I have renounced the privilege of inhibition the Accusations Committee has pointed out last year so the process could continue. I support all the efforts being made so the process can be open to the country, hiding nothing, evading nothing. Let the truth, which is what we all want, be known, not half-truths, not incomplete truths, not bits of truths.

We are honoring the truth this evening by remembering Alvaro Gomez Hurtado, congratulating Dario Bautista, and delivering radio, press, television, photography, sketch, and promotion awards. Congratulations go to good Colombian journalism and to the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Bogota Press Club.

May the memory of those who are with us in spirit in this room today enlighten us. Good night.

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Colombia: Charges Against President Samper Examined

96SM0114A Santa Fe de Bogota SEMANA in Spanish 13 Feb 96 pp 24-29

[FBIS Translated Text] Zero hour has arrived. After months of waiting, and amid a suspense that can be explained only by the magnitude of the consequences that this could hold for Ernesto Samper's future and for Colombia's own political history, Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdivieso is ready to file a formal complaint [denuncia] against the president of the republic before the Chamber of Representatives' Accusations Commission.

With over 20,000 pages accumulated throughout a year and a half of investigations in the so-called case 8000, as well as testimonial and evidential material the true scope of which will be put to the test within the next few days, Valdivieso will submit a document concerning acts and possible crimes that may have been committed by the head of state. It is destined to become the first major summation of the events that occurred in what is now considered the greatest political scandal in contemporary Colombia.

SEMANA worked for several days with a group of criminal lawyers, reviewing the accumulated leaks of the subject matter of case 8000. It also consulted some sources from the Prosecutor General's Office who, although they are acting particularly reserved while the commission of faceless prosecutors and the top echelon of the accusing entity work on the document containing the complaint against Samper, hinted at what might be the final direction of the complaint. The result is the following analysis of the different legal categories of crime being analyzed by the judicial authorities, to learn whether such conduct was legally categorized as criminal in the case involving the chief executive. In a way, it is an advance notice of the imminent disclosure of the prosecutor general's cards pertaining to what, in fact, the Prosecutor General's Office has been able to establish regarding Samper's participation in the acts.

Illicit Enrichment

Since the faceless prosecutors began pulling the strings in case 8000, the first major debate generated dealt with the possibility of applying the legal category of illicit enrichment to this case. This crime was initially conceived for government employees, and thus was included in the criminal code at the beginning of the last decade.

If everything had retained those dimensions, it is possible that this crime would never have been mentioned in the investigations of the Samper campaign's financing, because, during the period of the campaign, its directors were not government employees. However, a decree-law issued by Virgilio Barco's government (on the same day of Luis Carlos Galan's assassination), in the context of the state of siege, established a type of illicit enrichment for private individuals. It was Alfonso Gomez Mendez (then attorney general) who proposed to Barco on that day that he take advantage of the state of siege to issue the ruling.

The article, which was converted into permanent legislation in 1991 by the "Congresito" [mini-congress] following the Constituent Assembly, reads as follows: "Anyone who, directly or through an intervening person, accrues for himself or for another an unjustified increase in assets, derived in one way or another from criminal activities, shall, by that act alone, incur imprisonment for between five and 10 years, and a fine equivalent to the value of the illicit enrichment attained."

Weeks after Barco issued the ruling, the Supreme Court made a pronouncement on its scope and, although declaring it possible to implement, pointed out that, since it involved a state of siege decree issued on account of the war against the drug traffic, and state of siege rulings had to be linked with the cause that prompted it to be declared, the "criminal activities" mentioned in the article had to be related "to the drug traffic and associated crimes," according to the Supreme Court's decision.

Since it came into existence in 1989, the ruling has had little application but, last year, when they began evaluating the cases involving Santiago Medina and Fernando Botero, the faceless prosecutors on the commission conducting process 8000 concluded that the crime of illicit enrichment of private individuals could be legally categorized. The prosecutors did not consider Medina and Botero the ones who became rich, but rather those who had helped a third party to become rich with the money contributed to the campaign by the Cali Cartel. And, since the ruling applies equally to the one becoming rich and the one making another rich, they concluded that this crime could be legally categorized, in one case or the other.

To be consistent with that accusation against Medina and Botero, the Prosecutor General's Office would have to accuse the president of this crime, because he is presumed to be the one whom Medina and Botero helped to elect with the cartel's money. But, since being elected president with that money is not necessarily the same thing as becoming rich with it, the Prosecutor General's Office imported an Italian theory applied by the prosecutors in the Clean Hands case. When introduced into case 8000, this theory implies that

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Samper's election as head of state with the aid of "narco-money" would have represented a benefit for him in social and economic status equivalent to the increase in assets mentioned in the ruling.

As is only logical, this Italian-style interpretation is arousing all kinds of controversies, because equating the rise in status produced by assuming the presidency of the republic with an increase in assets is not something agreed upon by all criminal lawyers, even considering the fact that, besides the president's four-year salary, there is a lifetime pension for an ex-president that might well be viewed as an increase in assets. However, to the majority of Colombians this is a legal technicality, because the only illicit enrichment understood by them is that represented by a mansion, a swimming pool, and a Mercedes-Benz. Enrichment through a rise in status is a bold new notion.

Another argument against legally categorizing the crime of illicit enrichment against Samper is that the one who became rich was not the candidate, but rather the campaign and, since liabilities are individual in criminal law, the candidate cannot be indicted on this account. Nevertheless, contradicting this argumentation are those who claim that the Constitution is very clear in such cases, because in Article 109 it states that the one answerable for his campaign's accounts is the candidate. Or, more specifically, they maintain that, in this case, the campaign is the candidate.

A few months ago, another obstacle arose for the contention of the Prosecutor General's Office. It involves the argument that was being used by the attorneys of several of those implicated in case 8000. They claim that there could not have been illicit enrichment of private individuals because, for this, before the money had been received by those persons there would have to have been a judgment appealable to the Executive but not to a higher court against the brothers Miguel and Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela for drug trafficking. Otherwise, it could not be asserted that the money contributed by them through their enterprises was derived (as the ruling requires) from that crime.

However, the preceding allegation has been refuted in the Supreme Court's criminal chamber. As a source from that high court told SEMANA: "The mere fact that there has been confirmation of the arrests of Rodrigo Garavito and Alberto Santofimio for the crime of illicit enrichment of private individuals means that the Supreme Court is giving support to the contention of the Prosecutor General's Office that no prior judgment is needed to determine the criminal origin of the money."

Favoring the contention now shared by the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor General's Office is a section of the article on illicit enrichment. It is the one stating that money derived "in one way or another" from criminal activities is illicit. According to the experts, that expression "one way or another" offers a wide margin for the interpretation and scope of the ruling.

So, it is clear that the president could be accused of illicit enrichment, but this will trigger a sharp controversy, not over the criminal origin of the money, but rather over the viability of demonstrating that Samper accrued some benefit comparable to an increase in assets. SEMANA was told by one of the criminal lawyers consulted: "Obviously, all this stems from the basic premise that it can be proven that Samper, as Fernando Botero claims, knew about the entry of that money, because the president could hardly be accused of benefiting from a criminal conduct in which he did not participate."

Ultimately, this accusation will be viable only if three facts are proven. First, that money from the drug traffic entered the campaign in amounts that could have influenced the election results, something of which there are no longer any doubts. Second, that Samper is the real beneficiary of the entry of that money, something on which there will surely be much legal debate. And third, that Samper was apprised of it, as Santiago Medina and Fernando Botero have claimed, something on which the testimony is clear; however, what is unclear is whether there is any documentary proof, apart from their statements. Even so, it is a fact that the prosecutor general's charge will include this crime because, not only does the Prosecutor General's Office require it to proceed with the accusations of illicit enrichment of third parties against Botero and Medina, but also, the Prosecutor General's Office, in its complaint, is not obliged to prove that such conduct existed. Rather, it is obliged to state whether it believes that there is sufficient evidence to warrant opening a formal investigation to learn whether that crime occurred.

Prevarication by Omission

According to certain portions of the Medina and Botero statements, during the first half-year of his government, and before the pressure from the United States caused many in Colombia to fear, in early 1995, that the country might lose its certification for the antidrug battle, Samper issued instructions to his then defense minister not to floor the accelerator on the Special Search Task Force's pursuit against the Cali Cartel's top echelon. The essence of these assertions also has been confirmed by Botero's attorney, Fernando Londono Hoyos.

According to those statements, Samper wanted to give the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers and their associates a little time to surrender to justice. If this story is

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confirmed, an accusation of prevarication by omission could become reinforced against the president. This ruling stipulates that "any public servant who omits, delays, refuses, or denies an act inherent in his duties shall incur" a penalty of from three to eight years in prison.

What the Prosecutor General's Office is attempting to assess at present is whether Botero's statement contains sufficiently convincing evidence showing that the president, in fact, obstructed his minister in the latter's attempts to pursue the cartel. For this purpose, one of the episodes that the judicial authorities are attempting to clarify is the one involving the apologies expressed publicly by the military authorities, at Botero's order, for a raid in late 1994 during the First Communion of a daughter of Miguel Rodriguez. What the Prosecutor General's Office is trying to determine is whether the order to express those apologies emanated from the head of state as a result of a complaint made directly by Rodriguez to a high-ranking official at Casa Narino, as has been inferred from certain sections of the process 8000 case records. If the Prosecutor General's Office concludes in its assessment that there is sufficient evidence to support this charge, it will include that crime in its report to the Accusations Commission. This charge would also arouse much debate, because the president of the republic is the commander in chief of the Armed Forces and, as such, has discretionary powers for making military decisions. In other words, he is the one who decides which criminal organizations to pursue. Contradicting this argument is the fact that, with an arrest warrant intervening, the authorities are dutybound to execute it.

Abuse of Authority By Failure To File a Complaint

There is a possibility that, in the process that will be triggered by the prosecutor general's charge, it may prove impossible to demonstrate with complete evidence that Samper learned during the campaign about the entry of the cartel's funds in amounts totaling millions. But what could, indeed, be demonstrated is that, once he was elected president, with the information that he had, and with the disclosure of the "narcocassettes" and other subsequent revelations, Samper must have realized what happened during his campaign.

As an ex-magistrate of the Supreme Court explained to SEMANA: "In that case, there is no doubt that the chief executive should have brought a formal charge before the judicial authorities against those who ran his campaign." Samper did not do that. On the contrary, many parts of case 8000 indicate that he and Botero could have strung Medina along suggesting his appointment as ambassador to a European city, to prevent the matter from being disclosed. And, according to Botero, after he was arrested, the one who had been strung along became the ex-minister.

If these acts are confirmed, the preceding would give the Prosecutor General's Office grounds for accusing the president of abuse of authority for failure to file a formal complaint. According to the criminal code, "a government employee with knowledge of the commission of a crime the investigation of which should be conducted at the government's initiative, who fails to notify the authorities, shall incur loss of employment."

The only thing clear in this respect is that such an accusation is in order only if the Prosecutor General's Office rejects the illicit enrichment charged against Samper, because failure to file a formal complaint would not be established if the one committing it is among those implicated in the crime.

Procedural Fraud and Fraud

As has already been noted, the strongest accusation is the one that was generating less of an impact on public opinion until a few days ago. It involves the crimes that could be derived from the fact that the Samper campaign exceeded by a wide margin the legal limits set by the electoral law.

The facts already confirmed by an expert examination on the part of both the Electoral Council and the Prosecutor General's Office prove that, in fact, the Samper campaign exceeded the 4 billion peso limit for the two runoff votes in the presidential election by at least 2.5 billion. The confirmation of this occurred based on the vouchers for campaign expenditures submitted by the administrative director, Juan Manuel Avella, to the faceless prosecutors. There is abundant evidence that the limits were exceeded by far more but, since this is money that was negotiated in cash, apart from the voluminous testimony confirming the preceding and the receipts submitted by Medina, there is no record of it in Avella's documents.

In any event, whatever excess there might have been in the receipts and expenditures, the fact is that the account balances submitted by the campaign after Samper's election proved false, because those balances indicated that the campaign spent no more than 3.8 billion pesos. According to the findings of the Electoral Council's experts, there were serious alterations and nonexistent accounting entries in those balances, among other irregularities.

The seriousness of the preceding lies in the fact that, based on the falsification of those balances, the campaign accrued approximately 1.8 billion pesos as a replenishment of funds from the State. The electoral authorities would never have turned over that money to the

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campaign if the balances had reflected the large extent to which the limits were exceeded. The campaign, so to speak, deceived the Electoral Council and, thanks to that, obtained 1.8 billion pesos in State funds: in other words, the taxpayers' money.

At the outset, Samper's responsibility for this might seem rather unclear because, as he himself has stated, as a candidate he did not participate closely in the decisions involving the campaign's accounting and administrative management. Nevertheless, certain evidence overturns this defense of the president. First, there are several testimonies in the process that would indicate that Samper had a much closer intervention in these matters than he has admitted, and that he chaired a group of financial committees in the final stretch of the campaign, during the days preceding the runoff vote. On the other hand, there is the president's own statement to the investigating representative, Heyne Mogollon, in which he admitted having negotiated nearly 3 billion pesos with the country's three major economic groups, for the runoff vote, even though the limit for that runoff vote was only 2 billion. In addition to all this, there is the constitutional principle in Article 109, which some jurists interpret as signifying that the candidate must answer for the accounts in his campaign.

Juridically speaking, the crime of procedural fraud would be legally established in this case, defined as follows in the criminal code: "Anyone who, by any fraudulent means, induces a government employee to error in order to obtain a judgment, resolution, or administrative act contrary to law, shall incur imprisonment of between one and five years." In this case, the balances are the fraudulent means, the Electoral Council is the authority induced to error, and the replenishment of the 1.8 billion is the administrative act contrary to law.

Owing to this same problem, the one involving the falsified balances, there might be a possibility of legally establishing another crime: that of fraud. According to a Supreme Court judgment of February 1984, when, in procedural fraud, "economic advantage to the detriment of another" is accrued as a benefit, a fraud occurs in addition to the procedural fraud. According to the criminal code, fraud has a penalty of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

As is evident, the president's legal situation is complex, although so is the possibility of undertaking a demonstration of Ernesto Samper's direct liability, at least in one of the possible crimes. In criminal law it does not suffice that a particular conduct has been shown. In addition to this, the process must demonstrate that the perpetrator of the actions acted with full knowledge: in other words, that he is guilty of what happened. As one Supreme Court judgment of 1980, frequently quoted by criminal lawyers, states: "There is no crime if the act is not voluntary." And that voluntariness must be demonstrated during the process.

But apart from these rather academic considerations, the fact is that prosecutor Valdivieso's charge, if some of the preceding possible crimes (or even others that may be under study by the Prosecutor General's Office) are confirmed, will have a political effect and one on public opinion that will transcend the country's borders. The fact that the attorney general of the nation judicially charges the president of the republic, and indicates the possible commission of a series of crimes, will be viewed by many as an almost condemnatory act. For example, to the United States press and authorities, the news would have a significance that could oblige Washington to make decisions that were remote possibilities up until now.

According to a State Department source in that city, "To our government, the prosecutor general's charge has the value of a judicial pronouncement, on the basis of which it is possible, for example, that President Clinton may be obliged to implement Section 487 of the Law on Foreign Aid. This entails suspension of that aid when the president of the United States learns, or has well-founded suspicions, that the supreme government of a country receiving our aid is affected by corruption." According to the source, "This is even more serious if that corruption is linked to the issue of narcotics, which we consider a national security issue."

As for Colombia, the reactions will surely be divided. Since there are no recent precedents of criminal charges against presidents, it is to be expected that the controversy will be major. In view of the fact that, in legal matters, there are as many opinions as there are lawyers, it will not be easy to reach a consensus on the charges. And considering the fact that a judgment in Congress is determined partly by political loyalties, the conclusion is that the process may be described right now as one with a reserved prognosis.

Colombia: Editorial Urges Amendment To End Crisis

PA2302223696 Santa Fe de Bogota EL ESPECTADOR in Spanish 22 Feb 96 p 2A

[Editorial: "A Democratic Solution"; passages within slantlines published in italics]

[FBIS Translated Text] From every point of view, it is pointless and hairsplitting to discuss whether the trial against the Colombian president is political or juridical. This trial is of both natures. There will always be

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interrelations in these proceedings — although carried out on a separate basis — that invade the very delicate grounds of moral behavior, that is to say, the indignity of the behavior displayed.

However, it is not only an aspect that directly involves what President Ernesto Samper could have done or had failed to do during his presidential campaign. We Colombians are resentful at and in a permanent state of disbelief in front of our rulers. It does not matter whether the Executive Branch or the Judicial and Legislative Branches are involved. It is a matter of how they accomplish the duties they have been entrusted with and about the interference by outsiders that harm these procedures. This is exactly what maintains this country in a state of crisis and disunity with the state branches.

Let us call a spade a spade. It is not an exaggeration to say that political corruption has been present in Colombian elections long before drug trafficking exercised a determining economic power. Patronage and the sale and purchase of votes were barely the external symptoms of this state of moral collapse that has been transformed into a need to alter official contracts through fixed tenders and the manipulation of departmental lotteries and public welfare funds.

When none of the aforementioned was sufficient to pay for electoral expenses and the elections had already become stores for the sale and purchase of votes, then they resorted to drug trafficking money. In this way, the sacred obligation of lawmaking for the country's well-being was compromised by becoming a purchasable object for commercial transactions, regardless of the source of these funds.

Due to this and other factors that water down democracy, we Colombians have lost our faith and belief in the political institutions and in those who are in charge of them.

At this supreme moment, we Colombians should humbly be determined to make amendments in heartfelt contrition.

Convinced that this is simultaneously a political, juridical, and moral case that cannot be resolved with mere court rulings or with resounding discussions of expert value, we should resort to formulas that will facilitate a prompt and democratic solution.

Therefore, we propose to make an amendment to the Constitution. This amendment will bring an end to the current presidential and legislative terms of office. In addition, it will convoke new elections under very strict rules for campaign financing and for the selection of those who will interpret the new urgent standards of unyielding honesty and morality so as to insure institutional strength.

In order to reach this democratic solution, both President Samper and Congress could adopt a true patriotic spirit during the regular sessions that will begin in March.

This legislative action could take place during the regular sessions in July. In this way, Colombians — who have already known worse — would exercise their duty as citizens to elect the nation's rulers.

It is a matter of finding a democratic solution to the current crisis. Rather than an elusive *popular consultation* that is limited to a yes or a no, this would grant a constitutional mandate to our rulers, including Congress obviously, through the deliberate sanction of a freely issued vote and with the open participation of all sectors.

It is not a matter of a legal plunder, but a patriotic, political, and moral rectification for Colombia's well-being.

After all, democracy is nothing more than a set of opposing interests that, at a given moment, must agree for the sake of the great national interest.

Colombia: Samper, Governors Discuss Guerrillas, Security

PA2402033596 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Canal A Network in Spanish 0000 GMT 21 Feb 96

[From the "Seven O'Clock Newscast"; monitored from retransmission by Lima Sistema Unido de Retransmision Television at 0100 GMT 21 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ernesto Samper met with all the country's governors at the Narino Palace on 20 February. As for public order, Samper said he is worried about guerrilla incursions in isolated areas of the country, and he talked about establishing a structure that would truly guarantee security for the citizens.

The president reaffirmed that regional talks with guerrillas are not allowed under any circumstances, and he pointed out that only he can handle this issue.

Samper voiced his gratitude for the regional support his government has received to steer what he described as a vessel amid a storm that is trying to get safely into port.

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Colombia: Cali Leader Suffers 'Heart Preinfarction'

PA2302203596 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Canal A Network in Spanish 0000 GMT 23 Feb 96

[From the "Seven O'Clock Newscast"; monitored from retransmission by Lima Sistema Unido de Retransmision Television at 0100 GMT 23 Feb]

[FBIS Translated Text] Top Cali Cartel leader Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela today suffered a heart preinfarction in La Pincota jail. Rodriguez Orejuela was immediately visited by his wife, Miriam Ramirez, and three cardiologists.

Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela was at a meeting with his pool [preceding word in English] of lawyers in a room near his cell in the maximum security section, when he suffered the preinfarction. One of the attorneys who was present tells what happened:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified attorney] All I could see is that he fainted, he passed out...

[Unidentified reporter, interrupting] What was the time?

[Attorney] They caught his fall, sat him in a chair, and he immediately became completely pale white. I saw that he was very pale. He was given attention immediately. [end recording]

The jail's doctor immediately went to the room where the lawyers were and examined the Cali Cartel leader's medical condition. Two more cardiologists turned up in La Picota installations and conducted a series of tests on Rodriguez Orejuela to evaluate the possibility of moving him to the Chayo clinic.

Moments after learning the news, Miriam Ramirez de Rodriguez, Gilberto Rodriguez' wife, entered the jail compound in a luxurious vehicle and with no escorts. Rodriguez Orejuela had a tough day. That morning he was visited by Monsignor Pedro Rubiano, president of the Colombian Episcopal Conference.

Deputy Carlos Alonso Lucio, who was also visiting, was with Rodriguez Orejuela when he fainted. Lucio refused to give any statements when he left the jail.

Late afternoon, a personal friend of Gilberto Rodriguez, said it was a momentary health problem.

[Begin recording] [Reporter] [words indistinct]

[Personal friend] Very well, magnificently.

[Reporter] Were you able to speak to him? What was the incident? What have the doctors told you?

[Personal friend] I believe he suffered an unimportant drop in blood pressure. [end recording]

Colombia: ANIF on Economic Effects of Current Crisis

96SM0115A Santa Fe de Bogota EL ESPECTADOR in Spanish 16 Feb 96 p 2B

[Article by correspondent Elizabeth Canas Rodriguez]

[FBIS Translated Text] Medellin—Although the political crisis cannot be solved with economic measures, the country's finances and economic growth are on a scale that is being tipped by the implications of Case 8000.

This is proven in the statements made by the president of the National Association of Financial Institutions (ANIF), Javier Fernandez de Riva, during the course of the Macroeconomic and Sectorial Forecast Seminar in Medellin. He indicated that there is an increasing possibility that a recession in growth may occur in the country, noting that this is confirmed by the information contained in the Fedesarrollo [Federation for Education and Development] survey.

"During the past two weeks, the growth in credit and financial assets shows that there is a substantial slowdown, exceeding predictions, and that, as the crisis is prolonged, we shall have more problems. It is not that the crisis is causing the entire problem. There are many other factors, such as the coffee crisis, that in construction, the collapse of Venezuela, and the attack against the drug traffickers itself, with short-term effects."

Nevertheless, the association's leader claimed: "The political crisis is preventing the adoption of more aggressive measures to solve those problems. For example, it is prompting the Central Bank to maintain higher interest rates than would be reasonable under different circumstances. A country can withstand many things, and Peru withstood Alan Garcia for four years, but the cost is enormous in terms of growth, and every point that we lose in the latter represents about 700 billion pesos per year." He stressed that the political crisis has no solution through the economy, and "must be resolved in political terms. So long as the crisis persists, there will be a cost, and there is no economic margin that can remedy that."

However, he claimed that if the political situation is resolved, a policy of lower interest rates will have to be promoted, "because they are high, and are creating problems. These are rates for a overheated economy, as if it were having strong growth, which is not our situation."

He commented: "The due process that Samper invoked could produce results within a reasonable period, but

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what is unquestionably causing great harm is this interim and the constant doubts."

Investment Hurt

The co-director of the Central Bank, Hernando Jose Gomez, for his part, declared that, although the political situation is disturbing, it is not hurting the economy in the short term. He explained that the consequences have an effect on investment processes, and not on immediate demand or consumption, remarking: "However, people are beginning to postpone investment decisions. The effects to date are more a result of the macroeconomic policies."

Ecuador

Ecuador: Military 'Satisfied' Over Meetings With Peru

PY2702011296 Quito Voz de Los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Ecuadoran Armed Forces are satisfied over the agreement signed in Quito on Friday between Foreign Minister Galo Leoro Franco and his Peruvian counterpart Francisco Tudela. This statement was made by Ecuadoran Defense Minister General Alfonso Alarcon. He said that the Armed Forces will agree with everything that is beneficial for the people:

[Begin recording] The people want peace, a peace with dignity, and we are part of that people. As such, we are ready to support all types of positions of the Ecuadoran people. [end recording]

General Jorge Ortega, chief of the Armed Forces Joint Command, also supports this position:

[Begin recording] This is highly positive. I think the two countries are seeking a final objective — the quest for peace — and I think this represents a step forward on this path. We hope, then, that these negotiations will continue so as to achieve the final objective. [end recording]

With the purpose of strengthening this peace process, the commanders of the Ecuadoran and Peruvian Armed Forces will meet during the first week of March in Quito and in Lima to sign an agreement on subjects that will be established during those meetings. [passage omitted]

Ecuadoran Deputy Foreign Minister Mario Aleman said that the meeting of the Ecuadoran and Peruvian foreign ministers was important because the two countries are seeking peace through the negotiating table. Aleman said that at the meeting, unfortunately, it was obvious that there existed military pressures and the hardening of the Peruvian diplomatic position, which sought to obtain the list of impasses. It is hoped that this will be the last Ecuadoran concession because the next stage is approaching, and Peru is already marking the border. For President Fujimori said in Brazil that the only important aspect remaining in the demarcation of the 78 kilometers is just that, the demarcation. Aleman said that when there is conflict on the matter, the most logical thing is to carry out a technical delimitation of the zone, to see which of the two countries is right.

The Peruvian president today also announced in his country that he will not accept a new arbitration on the territorial conflict between Ecuador and Peru.

Ecuadoran Defense Minister Alfonso Alarcon has said that the demilitarization of Watch Post 2, PV2, which is also known as Soldier Vargas, is a firm step toward peace between Ecuador and Peru. [passage omitted]

Ecuador: Leoro Says Peru's Actions 'Step Forward'

PY2602205396 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1846 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Quito, 26 Feb (EFE) — Ecuadoran Foreign Minister Galo Leoro today termed the Peruvian Government's decision to discuss for the first time the "infeasibility" of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol, which established the border between Peru and Ecuador in 1942, "a step forward."

Leoro said that the lists of "prevailing impasses" handed over last Friday in sealed envelopes to representatives of guarantor countries of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States) are final and cannot be eliminated by either of the two parties.

Leoro said: "The lists of 'impasses' cannot be discussed by either of the parties. The infeasibility of the Protocol has thus far been, for Peru, an untouchable issue, one that could not be discussed because it was not subject to negotiation."

He recalled, however, that now that the lists have been handed over, "the matters established in them must be discussed," and they cannot be ruled out. If that were to happen, the negotiations would be "blocked." [passage omitted]

Ecuador: Army Allegedly Tortured Colombians by 'Mistake'

PY2602164196 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1248 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Quito, 26 Feb (EFE) — Colombian citizens Alirio and Martha Sanchez claim to have been tortured by the Ecuadoran Army, suspected of an attempt to assassinate Colombian President Ernesto

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Samper during the visit he paid to Quito to attend the Rio Group and Andean summits.

During the "Dentro y Fuera" ["Inside and Outside"] program which is carried by the local "Ecuavisa" television station, Alirio and Martha disclosed that they were "horribly" tortured with electric shocks and beatings and by psychological methods so they would admit planning to murder Samper.

The Sanchez couple said they were attacked by some hooded individuals who tied them up and "concocted a plot that involved the assassination" of Samper, which is what they were hired for according to the abductors. [passage omitted]

Alirio Sanchez said the individuals tried to force him, under all sorts of pressure, to sign a document confessing he planned to assassinate Samper on 3-5 September, during the Rio Group and Andean summits in Quito.

He explained: "The document said I was going to assassinate President Samper during the Rio summit and that I had prepared the plan with a group of terrorists."

After refusing to sign the document, his abductors started to torture his wife, Martha, with electric shocks.

They were later taken to a military base in Southern Quito where they were put in a cell.

They were never left alone, not even to go to the toilet.

The Sanchez couple disclosed that after that "nightmare," Major Francisco Izurieta [not further identified] asked "to be forgiven" for the "mistake" and let them go.

Alirio added: "Maj. Francisco Izurieta summoned us and asked to be forgiven because a mistake had been made. The officer said his own people made a mistake." [passage omitted]

Peru

Peru: Tudela Evaluates Agreements Reached With Ecuador

PY2702000596 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1807 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lima, 25 Feb (EFE) — The Peruvian Government has ordered the withdrawal of 390 soldiers from Watch Post 2 (PV2), which is located outside the demilitarized zone established between Peru and Ecuador, in compliance with the agreement signed by the foreign ministers of the two countries on 23 February.

Government sources reported that the measure was implemented on 26 February to comply with the agreement signed by Peruvian Foreign Minister Francisco Tudela with his Ecuadoran counterpart at the conclusion of the negotiations held in Quito.

Immediately after returning to Lima on 26 February, Tudela met with General Nicolas de Bari Hermoza, chairman of the Armed Forces Joint Command; Defense Minister Tomas Castillo Mezas; and other military officials.

During the meeting, Tudela briefed the military officials on the result of his meeting with Ecuadoran Foreign Minister Galo Leoro. It was later learned at the highest political-military level that the order was given but that the withdrawal process could not be fulfilled in a few hours, and that "if this is achieved in one or two weeks, it would be a success."

Tudela also said that the list of the "impasses" or disagreements prepared by Ecuador, which was delivered in strict secrecy to the representatives of the guarantors of the 1942 Rio de Janeiro Protocol, will be known in less than 72 hours.

The troop withdrawal will be carried out by General Luis Perez Documet, chief of the Sixth Military Region, which has its headquarters in Bagua, where PV2 is located.

General Perez Documet will have to draw up a plan to keep 60 soldiers at that post in accordance with the agreement because there are currently 450 Army soldiers and not 5,000, as reported by Ecuadoran officials.

Tudela told EL COMERCIO that it was impossible to discuss the procedures related to point six of the Itamaraty Peace Declaration without knowing the list of the subsistent impasses or Ecuadoran claims.

"Once we have the list, based on the agreement, we will begin the discussions on the impasses," said Tudela, who also indicated that Peru has drawn up a strategy to fulfill the agreement, and that in a few days the demobilization of troops established in the bilateral agreement will be completed to be able to learn about the list of impasses presented by Ecuador.

Tudela emphasized that Peru proposed having some soldiers remain at PV2. He said: "We sustain that Peru has the right to keep 450 men at that watch post, which is outside the demilitarized zone, because they were there before the 1995 military conflict."

Tudela said Ecuador proposed that only 25 soldiers remain at PV2, and he acknowledged that the negotiations, while very difficult and long, were ultimately successful. Tudela added: "The country can rest assured that we carried out good negotiations."

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Tudela also discarded the notion that this decision was risky for the country's sovereignty. In this regard, he added that "PV2 depends on the quality of personnel, and the number of soldiers, from the military point of view, is adequate for defending national sovereignty if needed."

Tudela was clear in pointing out that the term demobilization does not represent a step backward in the progress made regarding the Itamaraty peace declaration, which, in February 1995, put an end to the undeclared war between Peru and Ecuador that started on 26 January 1995.

Tudela added: "The term demobilization is used within the context of a bilateral agreement that has nothing to do with the peace declaration, and it is not a demand of the MOMEP [Ecuador-Peru Military Observers Mission]." He said this is a voluntary demobilization and "a gesture made by Peru to create confidence and the necessary environment to have Ecuador deliver the list."

Tudela said that receiving the list of the impasses in the next few days is part of the peace negotiations, and that during the upcoming Andean presidential summit in Trujillo, Peru, there is the possibility of meeting with his Ecuadoran counterpart Galo Leoro to discuss this issue.

Regarding the upcoming Ecuadoran elections, Tudela said: "There is no threat that the new government may ignore the agreements because they are between states, not between governments, and do not compromise the rights of the parties. Ignoring them would be offensive to the guarantor countries."

Peru: Tudela Remarks on Troop Withdrawals

PY2702003096 Madrid EFE in Spanish
0224 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Lima, 24 Feb (EFE) — Peruvian Foreign Minister Francisco Tudela today said that Peru will learn in less than 72 hours about the list of "impasses" submitted yesterday by Ecuador to representatives of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol guarantor countries.

Tudela said that to achieve the submission of the list of "prevailing impasses" from Ecuador, the Peruvian Government proposed to maintain only 60 soldiers at Watch Post 2 (PV2).

He explained that the 450 men who were at PV2 were there legally because they were transferred to that zone in November 1994, that is, before the conflict with Ecuador, which began on 26 January and ended on 28 February 1995.

"Peru has every right to keep those 450 men at PV2, but we have made a gesture to develop negotiations and achieve from Ecuador submission of the list of impasses," he said.

Tudela explained further that Peru had already begun the withdrawal of its troops from PV2; within a period of 72 hours, it will reduce the number of soldiers to the proposed figure noted above, and during that same period of time, the representatives of the guarantor countries will hand over the respective lists of "impasses" to the foreign ministers of the two countries or to their representatives, in Brasilia.

The withdrawal of troops will be verified by the Ecuador-Peru Mission of Military Observers (MOMEP 2), and the representatives of the guarantor countries will be officially informed about it.

Tudela told the ANDINA news agency that "the guarantor countries have promised to hand over the lists of impasses once Peru reduces to only 60 the number of troops at PV2, so we are talking about a period of 48 to 72 hours."

Returning from Quito, the Peruvian foreign minister explained that the withdrawal of extra men from PV2, established in the peace negotiations held over the past two days in Quito, is not an imposition by Ecuador but a mechanism adopted to generate confidence. [passage omitted]

Peru: Fujimori Rules Out New Arbitration on Border

PY2602215296 Madrid EFE in Spanish
1749 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Lima, 26 Feb (EFE) — Analyzing the development of peace talks between Peru and Ecuador, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori has said that Peru categorically rejects the possibility of a new arbitration to solve the border conflict with Ecuador.

In remarks to the television program "The Sunday Review," before leaving for Brazil last night, Fujimori said that the arbitration "was already made and was approved by the two countries in 1945; thus, it is impossible to rethink the same thing."

Fujimori said: "There is the arbitration by Admiral Bras Dias de Aguiar, who conducted painstaking work at the request of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol guarantor countries. The borders are clearly established in that document, with the geopgraphic features and border lines."

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He added: "This is not a game, and we cannot go from one arbitrator to another." [passage omitted]

Fujimori stressed the importance of the agreements signed last week in Quito by Peruvian Foreign Minister Francisco Tudela and his Ecuadoran counterpart Galo Leoro, through which, according to him, "a great step toward peace has been taken." [passage omitted]

Fujimori said that "surely the 'prevailing impasses' for Peru — which are very few — and for Ecuador, will be known within a week. [passage omitted]

Peru: Army Commander on Need To Renounce Military Action

PY2602181596 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1645 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lima, 25 Feb (EFE) — Ecuadoran Army Commander Paco Moncayo asserted that Ecuador and Peru must give up the idea of a military solution to the border conflict because only a negotiated peace solution it appropriate for an agreement.

In an exclusive interview published by the Lima daily EL COMERCIO today, Moncayo upheld the idea of renouncing war as a way to continue the dialogue between Peru and Ecuador following an undeclared war between the two countries in the Amazon border in the area without landmarks in early 1995.

Moncayo said that "a military confrontation is no way to resolve anything," after mentioning the agreements reached by Peruvian Foreign Minister Francisco Tudela and his Ecuadoran counterpart Galo Leoro during the second round of talks that ended on 23 February in Quito.

Moncayo denied reticence in Quito regarding the planned visit to Lima on 4 March by Ecuadoran Armed Forces chief General Jorge Ortega. He stressed that in Ecuador "there is an unanimous desire for the peace process. I have not heard anybody say the opposite."

He said that has he not heard anyone oppose President Sixto Duran-Ballen's visit to Peru to attend the Andean summit in Trujillo, 560 km north of Lima, on 8-10 March.

During a meeting with EL COMERCIO journalists in Quito, Moncayo said: "Many times it is easier to start a conflict than to end one."

He added that Peru and Ecuador are showing the American continent how two countries with such strong ties can, in an atmosphere of understanding, make progress along the path of peace.

Regarding the Peruvian decision to accept reducing the number of troops posted at Watch Post No. 2 (PV2), outside the demilitarized zone, he said: "The Peruvian attitude falls within the framework of the commitment undertaken under the Itamaraty Peace Agreement."

Moncayo asserted that "within the spirit of peace the two countries share, there is no reason to accumulate forces on one or the other side. We have taken the main steps and hope this year the negotiations will not cease until we sign a definite agreement for a lasting peace."

Moncayo also asserted that he is "absolutely certain" the troops will be withdrawn from PV2 and noted that "it is a responsible commitment undertaken with Peru."

He urged the Peruvian leadership to understand that Ecuador represents no threat nor is preparing for a conflict. He asserted that "the Peruvian people must realize that the Ecuadoran people want domestic and external peace that will not be temporary but lasting."

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